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GIOVANNI COSTA

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Giovanni Costa.

by Frederick, Lord Leighton.

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GIOVANNI COSTA

HIS LIFE, WORK, & TIMES

BY

OLIVIA ROSSETTI AGRESTI

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PREFACE

THIS biography was begun during the lifetime, and with the consent of, the artist whose well-spent life and noble work I have described. I thus had the inestimable benefit of many long talks with Giovanni Costa, who, up to the last, retained a singularly keen intellect and vivid, picturesque memory. From him I heard many particulars and anecdotes of his early years, so generously spent in the cause of his country's freedom, and of the men, famous in politics or art, with whom he came in contact. The hours thus spent with him in his apartment in the Palazzo Odescalchi in Rome, and at his villa at Marina di Pisa, will always remain among the most delightful of my life, and any interest this book may have is largely due to them.

I found it impossible to write of a man who lived at such a momentous period of his country's history, and who took so active a share in public life, without devoting several pages to historical matter, not actually connected with Costa, but necessary to a proper understanding of the events in which he took part. In writing on these subjects I have done my best to be correct, going to the original documents, and studying the question in an impartial spirit; but a good deal of the history of that period, especially that referring to the events which preceded the battle of Mentana, is yet to be written, and party interest and personal feeling still keep back or distort information

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necessary to a real understanding of the whole question. I cannot, therefore, disguise to myself the fact that I may be guilty of some inaccuracies; I will only say that I have done my best to avoid them.

As to that section of the Life which treats of artistic questions, I may here state that I have not endeavoured to write a book of art criticism, but a biographical survey of an artist's work.

My grateful thanks for valuable help received are due to Signora Costa, Mrs. Stillman, Sir William Richmond, and Lord Carlisle; to Mrs. Mathews and the late Mrs. Sutherland Orr, to Giovanni Fattori and to the Rev. Stopford Brooke for permission to publish letters; to Professor Ciampoli, librarian of the Biblioteca Vittorio Emanuele in Rome, who greatly facilitated my historical researches; and to the Hon. Giovanni Cadolini for much important information concerning the period preceding Mentana.

OLIVIA ROSSETTI AGRESTI.

Sept. 1903.

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GIOVANNI COSTA

CHAPTER I

CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH

RARELY in these days, when public curiosity allows no personage of note to pass by without a biography, when we are no longer willing to let a man live solely by his works, and stand or fall by them as they are weighed in the impartial scale of time, but when we wish to know his personality, his life, the why and the wherefore of his work, rarely does it fall to the lot of the biographer to chronicle the career of an artist so rich in events as that of Giovanni Costa.

We must, indeed, go back to the glorious period of the Italian Renaissance, to the period when Michelangelo, Leonardo, and Cellini divided their time between their studios and the courts of emperors, kings, and popes, between their art and the affairs of state, to find an artist whose life has been so earnestly, so passionately devoted to his work, and who has yet so constantly and so actively played his part in the public life of his country. And if this combination of the artist and the patriot is rare, still rarer is it to find a man who has pursued both these aims with such singleness of purpose, such disinterested enthusiasm, as Giovanni Costa invariably showed in the whole course of his long career. At the date of his birth Italy

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was at her lowest ebb, both politically and artistically. He played his part valorously in her political regeneration, and if her art can now boast works not entirely unworthy of her great traditions, and if the outlook for the future is hopeful, this is in great measure due to the work and influence of Costa.

Giovanni, or Nino Costa, to use the Roman abbreviation by which he was known in the artistic world, was born in Rome on the 15th October, 1826.

He was the son of Gioacchino and Maria Costa, and one of sixteen children, of whom Giovanni was the fourteenth.

His father was the wealthy owner of a large wool-spinning industry carried on in the Trastevere district of Rome, the portion of the city which till quite recently preserved its mediæval character, and whose population prides itself on the purity of its blood and the beauty of its women. Gioacchino Costa was one of those masters of the old stamp who have almost completely disappeared before the inroads of modern industrialism. He lived hard by his factory, in Piazza San Francesco a Ripa, in one of those large, roomy old houses, surrounded by a garden shut in by high walls, which are characteristic of the Trastevere district. He dwelt in the midst of his working-folk, respected and loved by them, and even to this day his memory is still cherished by the older inhabitants as that of a man who knew how to unite cordial—almost paternal—relations with his employees, along with the simple dignity of a *capo popolo*. In the neighbouring church of San Francesco a Ripa, famous for its Franciscan traditions (for in the convent attached to the church St. Francis lodged when in Rome), facing on the charming Piazza, stands a monument erected to the memory of

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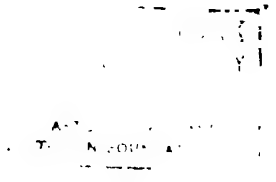

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PLATE II

THE ARTIST'S MOTHER

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Gioacchino and Maria Costa, who died in 1842 and 1857 respectively. This monument is the work of Domenico Morani, and is in the neo-classic style proper to that period, a style to which the typically Roman heads of our artist's parents lent themselves admirably.

Of this formidable family of sixteen children, no fewer than five brothers were destined to distinguish themselves in various walks of life. Antonio, the eldest, on his father's death, assumed the direction of the family affairs, managing the wool-spinning business, which continued a source of wealth to the brothers. So highly was he esteemed in Rome that in later life he occupied the important position of Vice-Director of the Bank of Rome. Filippo followed the profession of engineer, and to him Terracina owes her port; he was author of a scheme for constructing a ship-canal between Ostia and Rome, which would have realised the dream of the third Italy, making the capital a seaport; this scheme was never carried out owing to lack of funds. Like his brother Giovanni, he was a patriot; he joined an artillery regiment, of which he became major, and distinguished himself during the defence of Ancona in 1866. Paolo became an accountant, and the foundation of the Savings Bank in Rome is largely due to his efforts. Giuseppe was well known in his native city as a writer of verse in the Roman dialect; he was also author of a verse translation of the "Song of Solomon," which was much admired by the learned monks of the Benedictine order; moreover, Giuseppe, Paolo, and Filippo were all three distinguished musicians. The fifth to distinguish himself was Giovanni, the subject of this biography.

In this busy and populous Trastevere district of the

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Eternal City, within a stone's throw of the little river-side port of Ripa Grande, picturesque with the rigging and coloured sails of the small sailing ships which ply their trade between Sicily, Naples, Liguria, and Rome, surrounded by mediæval churches, by palace and convent gardens shut in by high walls, in an atmosphere of honest and industrious independence, Giovanni Costa spent the first twelve years of his life, passing the summer months with his family in their vineyard outside the Porta Portese, amidst which stood their villa, decorated with plaster reliefs and sculptured garlands in true eighteenth century style. This, along with so many other picturesque survivals of a past age, has disappeared, destroyed by the works for the embankment of the Tiber.

In those days, especially in Rome, education was entirely in the hands of the clergy, and at the age of six Costa was entrusted to his earliest preceptor, a priest, Don Pasquale by name. Of this excellent man Costa always preserved the most affectionate remembrance, though he could not recollect his surname, which has been lost to memory. He was an idealist and a republican, aflame with enthusiasm for the great deeds and heroes of classic antiquity, and he nurtured in his pupil the innate idealistic tendencies. The education of the period was strictly classical, and Plutarch's "Lives of the Famous Greeks and Romans," Livy's History, and the Bible stories, formed the basis of Costa's early studies, and often whilst reading of the heroic deeds of the mighty dead, master and pupil would be moved to tears.

It is interesting to note the influence exercised on the whole generation of revolutionists, from the athletes of the first French Revolution to the heroes of Italian independ-

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ence, by the traditions of classic republicanism. The historical criticism in vogue to-day had not yet upset preconceived ideas, by turning the Cæsars into the champions of democracy, and showing the younger Brutus, Cato, and their colleagues in the light of a tyrannical and rapacious oligarchy, jealous of the rights and liberties granted to the newer citizens of the world-wide Republic. The men of that age were steeped in classic lore; the histories of Livy, of Tacitus, of Plutarch, were to them the realities of life, the heroes of antiquity seemed to brood over them, moulding these moderns after their own image.

Spite of his religious training, Costa, from his earliest years, showed himself to be of a sceptical disposition. His temperament was idealistic, and, in that sense, religious; but he was unable to narrow his conceptions of the divinity to fit in with the requirements of Catholic dogma, and even from his tenderest years he could not believe in the Padre Eterno as an old Man with a beard, living up in the clouds, and he would affirm his incredulity with such assurance that even Don Pasquale felt it useless to attempt to convince him. Still, of course, as far as his education went, all was most orthodox, and amongst his earliest recollections was that of serving the mass at the parish church of Sta. Maria dell' Orto, and of the mischievous impatience with which he, and other little boys likewise employed, used to attempt to hurry through their duties, forcing the priest to scamper through the prayers by ringing precipitately the little bell which announces the consecration and elevation of the Host; whilst a favourite pastime of his was to induce the sacristan to let him into the belfry, there to swing on to the ropes and help ring out the chimes.

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Giovanni Costa

The artistic temperament almost always manifests itself early in life, and from childhood the little Nino was constantly busy with paper and pencil, and even before entering college at the age of twelve, he had shown some of his drawings to the painter Camuccini, and had received from him encouragement and advice.

At that period (*circa* 1838) the Baron Camuccini shared with Agricola the reputation of being the foremost of Italian artists, and though Italian art was then in full decadence these two prided themselves on being the heirs and legitimate descendants of Michelangelo and Raphael. Camuccini was a follower of the neo-classic school, founded by the French David, then in fashion (and in this school of art we can again trace the influence of the classic republican education of which I have spoken), and was greatly admired in Rome during the first half of the century. To him was given the commission to decorate with frescoes the apartment occupied in the Quirinal palace by the Empress Josephine. Amongst his chief works are "Cæsar's Wife," "Judith thanking God after killing Holofernes," the "Death of Cæsar," and the "Death of Virginia"; the very titles of which pictures are inspired by the spirit of Livy and Plutarch, though their artificial theatricality belies the dignified simplicity of genuine classic art. To this artist, then, as to the best authority of the day, were shown Nino Costa's early drawings. Camuccini was much interested in the boy's work; he showed him his own sketch-books containing studies from nature, amongst others one which especially struck Nino of a group of beggars seated on the steps leading to the church of St. Agnese. As Costa observed, Camuccini drew from the life accurately and vigorously,

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but he neglected to place his figures in their true relation to the background and surroundings, by the observance of which alone is art able to interpret nature, and in which lies the true test of the artist's powers. After carefully examining his work, Camuccini advised Costa to look about him, to study nature, to work direct from life. Strange advice might this seem coming from an academician devoted to classical models, cold and artificial in style as was the Baron; but no doubt he too had worked hard from the life in his youth, and evidently he was artist enough to detect promise in the boy's rude work, and to understand that his was a poetic temperament which would never bend to the stiff rules and artificiality of academic art.

At the age of twelve Costa left Rome, and the parental roof, to enter a college kept by priests at Montefiascone, celebrated for the excellency of its classical, and more especially Latin instruction; and there he passed the next five years. It was during these years that Costa acquired the great love of nature which distinguishes his work from that of the majority of Italian artists, in whom scenery is almost always subordinate to the human interest, and which was to make of him one of the great landscape painters of his day.

The small town of Montefiascone is perched on the top of a mountain, at the foot of which stretches a wide, fertile, and highly-cultivated valley, in whose midst glitters the broad expanse of the lake of Bolsena with its islands of Marta and Bisultina, where the Gothic queen, Amalasuntha, was imprisoned. The valley is surrounded by hills, crowned with their fortified mediæval village fortresses, grey masses of stone, standing out against the sky,

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culminating in the tower of the village belfry. Through the valley, flowing from the lake of Bolsena to the Tyrrhene Sea, which is visible as a blue streak on the horizon, meanders the little river Marta, a mere silver line as seen from the heights of Montefiascone; and rising in the plain one can discern the Etruscan town of Toscanella, whose architecture still bears the imprint of those earliest inhabitants and civilisers of Italy; Corneto, girt with her towers, stands out boldly against the sea-line.

The collegians were not allowed into the town, but used daily to take long walks in the country, and the splendid scenery by which he was here surrounded first inspired Costa with his love of nature, whilst the constant study of Virgil and Theocritus taught him to see landscape in a special way; and it was here that he first began to make pen and pencil drawings from nature.

These early drawings were not without a practical value to the boy. The keen mountain air, and the long country walks, combined to bless the scholars with hunters' appetites, whereas the fare provided by the good priests was of a decidedly frugal character, and they were careful not to afford their charges the opportunity of giving way to the deadly sin of gluttony. Costa's drawings were much appreciated by his fellow-pupils, who were anxious to become possessed of them, and so he was enabled to exchange them with those boys who could boast pocket-money, and whose anxious mammas provided them with hampers, for some substantial dainty with which to eke out the fast-day diet provided by the school. Thus early in life did our artist begin to execute commissions for his admirers!

The education imparted at Montefiascone was imbued

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with the same spirit of republican enthusiasm which had characterised the early tuition imparted by Don Pasquale. In the clerical schools and seminaries of those years was educated the generation which in 1848 was to strike the initial death-blow to the papal temporal power, and proclaim the triumph of free thought. In Costa's own words, the education given by the priests was of a dead age; the pupils lived in the past, but death, the dead, are always dignified. A noble idealism, an ardent love of country, that patriotism which the ancients considered the greatest of all virtues, and above all an invincible belief in the destinies and greatness of Rome, and a longing to see her return to her pristine glory, were sown in the hearts and brains of the youth which was to yield so rich a harvest of heroism in 1848 and 1849. How different all this from the modern, self-styled scientific education which seems to aim—to judge at least by its results—at stifling the enthusiastic, disinterested idealism, the rightful characteristic of youth, and which has given us a generation all too often old in its teens, which in Italy smiles with pitying contempt at the incorrigible idealism, the *quarantottate* of its elders.

Costa's classical studies progressed rapidly at Montefiascone. In the college Latin was the tongue currently talked in school hours, and thus real mastery of the language was obtained. One of the features of the education given in the schools of the day was the theological discussion or debate which the pupils were required to hold amongst themselves. These controversies were carried on in Latin, one pupil advocating an opinion which another had to oppose. On one occasion it fell to Costa to assume the part of *Advocatus Diaboli* in a debate on the "Existence of God." For three whole days did this wordy contest

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last, and Costa sustained his negative position with such conviction and valour that at last one of the teachers had to come to the assistance of theism and its advocate, as otherwise the victory seemed likely to remain on the side of atheism.

In 1843, at the age of seventeen, Costa left Montefiascone, and returned to Rome, where he entered the Bandinelli College, also kept by priests, staying there for another two years. Here he first began to study drawing regularly under a teacher, by name Durantini. It had by now become clear that his vocation was that of an artist; his early love of art had become a passion, and he longed to dedicate himself entirely to the studies necessary for following a painter's career. His elder brothers, however, on whom had devolved the management of family affairs on the death of their father, Gioacchino Costa, in 1842, did not sympathise with these ideas. They themselves were all in business; in those days the profession of artist was hardly considered a creditable career, and they were anxious for Giovanni to select a regular official employment. Doubtless his eldest brother, Antonio, who was then managing the family business, did not consider that pictures were likely to yield the comfortable profits derived from wool; nor, indeed, if such considerations guided his opposition to his younger brother's wishes, was he mistaken. Costa certainly spent more on his art than it ever yielded him; and as with all men in advance of their age, and of the popular taste of their day, his work and influence for good on modern Italian art will only be fully appreciated with time.

But, in Costa's case, as in that of almost all really gifted men, his firm will triumphed over all opposition,

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and, on leaving the Bandinelli College, where he had completed his studies, at the age of nineteen, he entered the studio of Baron Camuccini, who had been the first to encourage and counsel him in his artistic efforts. The element of struggling poverty, which so very generally characterises the early career of artists destined to become famous, was fortunately unknown to Costa; and I say fortunately, because his poetic temperament and passionate love of his art needed not the goad of poverty which, in so many cases, has urged on men in whom wealth and success have afterwards stifled the artist's soul.

In Camuccini's studio, however, the youth was not destined to remain long. Academic artificiality was not to his taste, and he was too mindful of the Baron's early advice of studying direct from nature, to feel satisfied with his teacher; so that after a few months they parted company. From this studio Costa passed to the official academy, where he worked a little under Coghetti, a Bergamasc artist noted for his religious pictures; under Baron Podesti, a painter of the romantic school much admired in those days; and under Agricola. But none of these artists realised Costa's ideal; he was destined to be an innovator, and he felt that he could derive no real benefit from such studies. Nature was the only mistress who could teach him what he wished to learn; he felt that he must acquire by patient study and loving research the knowledge he desired; and he bade goodbye to academies and masters, and started once more to spell out the page which nature had first spread out for him in the mountains and valleys round about Montefiascone.

It was at this period, or to be precise in 1847, that he began one of his first pictures; a minute and delicate study

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of a wood of hazelnut trees, on which he worked at intervals during a period of six years. This we shall notice again when reviewing the productions of his first period of serious artistic activity, when, finally freed from all doubts as to his right course of action, he broke with schools and traditions, and, burying himself in the country, worked patiently and enthusiastically from nature, conquering one by one the difficulties which beset his path, and asserting himself as a leader and reformer in modern Italian art. To this period (1847–48) belong a number of drawings and oil studies now belonging to his widow; all permeated with the romantic spirit then prevalent in art, but giving promise even then of future developments.

All this was to be. But the period we have reached was one when no true Italian could stand by, or hesitate as to where his duty lay. The seed sown by the great French Revolution and by the Napoleonic invasion was bearing fruit, and the revolution which had long been smouldering, and which had already given many martyrs to the great cause of national independence, was preparing to burst forth with renewed and unprecedented energy. Italy was in travail, giving birth to a new order of things in politics, in literature, and in art; and Costa, who, from his earliest years, had thrilled at the word Liberty, who by education was a citizen of the mighty Rome of antiquity, who had wept with emotion when reading of the heroic patriotism of the great citizens of ancient Greece and Rome, was not one who could sit still and look on when his country needed her sons to fight for her. His natural inclination, and the education he had received, both combined to make him feel it his duty to take part in the national struggle; and though his family, by position and

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tradition, belonged to the clerical party and were strongly opposed to revolutionary ideas, he experienced not a minute's hesitation. For his ideas he was willing to sacrifice his worldly interests, and laying aside his pencils and brushes till happier, or at least quieter, days should dawn, he was among the very first to answer the call to arms.

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CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL RETROSPECT

In order to understand the events which we shall now have to chronicle it is necessary to retrace our steps, and to note the conditions prevailing in Italy and Rome; to glance rapidly at the environment into which Nino Costa was born.

The last decades of papal rule in Rome, which preceded the revolutionary reawakening of 1848, witnessed a period of lethargy and decadence in politics, art, and social conditions in the Eternal City.

The Rome of 1820–48 was indeed different from the Italian capital of to-day; more picturesque and more squalid, more beautiful, and at the same time, uglier from certain points of view, whilst morally and intellectually it offered the spectacle of a population forgetful of its great traditions, contented to live a slothful and ignorant existence.

The French invasion under Napoleon had passed over Rome without leaving any permanent results, at least, any easily appreciable to the observer. Yet it is true that the electric shock administered to the whole Peninsula by the cataclysmic events of the French Revolution, and the subsequent Napoleonic exploits, was the signal for the reawakening of Italy; and the spark of national feeling then kindled never died, though for many years it smouldered unobserved, only manifesting itself now and

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again by the flaming of revolts, apparently easily stifled, but none the less significant for that. Yet of all the different states into which Italy was divided, none seemed more thoroughly somnolent than the papal dominions, more especially the city of Rome. The French had come and gone as strangers; they had carried off the pope, Pius VII., and had sent him back again, and the people seemed hardly to have noticed their passage. By order of the Emperor Napoleon, under the papacy of Pius VII., the excavations of the Forum had been undertaken, and the temples of Peace, of Antoninus and Faustina, of Concord, of Jupiter Stator, and the arches of Titus and Septimius Severus, had been disencumbered from the hovels which surrounded and shut them out of sight, and, rising from the soil which still half-buried them, they reappeared, eloquent monitors of past greatness. The Forum was no longer used as a cattle-market, and the designation of *Campo Vaccino*, by which it had been known since the Middle Ages till 1812, was abandoned. But in all these works, and in the civil reforms and innovations introduced by the Imperial government, the population of the city took scant interest.

In 1823 Pius VII., who, on resuming the temporal power, had conceded a civil and commercial code, and who had abolished torture in all its forms, with the exception of flogging, from the penal code, was succeeded by Leo XII., who mounted the papal throne with a liberal reputation which had given rise throughout his states to hopes which his weak, irresolute rule was not slow to belie. In 1829 he was in his turn succeeded by Pius VIII., who, during his brief reign of one sole year, brought about no change of any sort; and finally, in 1831, after a con-

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clave which lasted no less than sixty-four days, Gregory XVI. was elected.

Gregory XVI. was a monk of the Camaldolese order, versed in theological studies, to which he admitted as fellow-student his barber, the learned Domenico Moroni. In private life he was self-indulgent, and his drinking habits furnished ready matter for the satires of the day; in politics he was devoted to Austria, and his election was due in no small part to the intrigues of the court of Vienna. His rule, which lasted sixteen years, was marked by a blind, unreasoning hatred of progress under any and every form, from railroads to gas, constitutions, and legal reforms; and he hesitated at no form of cruelty and oppression by which to enforce his despotic rule.

During the first year of his reign the Great Powers had presented to him a memorandum setting forth various moderate reforms which they considered necessary in order to correct the shocking abuses which were rife throughout the papal states, and more especially in Romagna; but no steps were taken to act on the advice offered. On the contrary, every aspiration, every thought towards liberty, was severely punished and repressed if openly manifested. On the other hand, criminals enjoyed a large degree of immunity, due to carelessness and incapacity on the part of the authorities, when, indeed, they were not favoured, if enjoying the protection of some influential person; and the insecurity of both person and property throughout the papal states was proverbial. The one unpardonable sin was liberalism, and for this no mercy was to be hoped. During the reign of this pontiff, Mastro Titto, the headsman, carried out no fewer than 517 capital sentences, mostly passed on persons

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guilty of daring to think for themselves in matters of religion and politics.

The severity shown by Pope Gregory towards the liberals, in such striking contrast with the culpable toleration extended to common malefactors, was the result of an astute policy cleverly and persistently followed. Under pretext of reforming morals and of combating heresy and incredulity, the Pope favoured the existence of a state of things which later on gave rise to the formation of bands of brigands, who, in return for the leniency shown them by the papal authorities, were willing to become, when needful, powerful instruments in the hands of these latter wherewith to oppose the revolutionary uprisings of the liberals.

No more astute despot ever sat on the throne of St. Peter than this monk, whose conduct was stamped by the petty meanness and short-sighted policy of the monastery, and who, whilst showing himself merciless and inexorable towards thinkers, pandered in every way to the passions of the populace.

Nor was the society of the period unworthy of its patron. Whilst the prisons, or the hardships and bitterness of exile, awaited those few who dared to speak and act, the feeling and morality of the day were fairly pictured in the writings of the dialectal poet, Giovanni Gioacchino Belli. This writer, famous for upwards of four thousand sonnets written in the dialect of the Roman populace, is typical of the world he lived amidst. In his work he shows himself alive to all the corruption, the baseness, the ignominy of the priestly rulers who governed Rome. The lower clergy, the cardinals, the Pope himself, all are passed in review, each in turn set in the pillory; nor is

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he tenderer when treating of the religious practices and superstitions of the people. Yet this man, whom one would have expected to see persecuted for his biting irony and merciless satire, lived a fairly quiet life; untroubled, but for some passing clouds; occupying always fairly lucrative positions found for him by the very clergy whom he decried; and the reason of this tolerance is to be found in the man himself. Belli had, undoubtedly, a touch of genius; but he was not a strong character, he was not of the stuff of which a resolute and powerful enemy could be made. He was quite content to eat the bread and beg the favours of those whom he insulted, willing to recant, when needful, his words and acts, and of such men the papacy had little to fear. They amused the people, kept them good-humoured, and afforded the government a valuable opportunity for acting the part of the benevolent father towards the prodigal son. Little did it matter to the government that Belli and his peers vented their ill-humour by ridiculing the vices of the Pontiff and his court; it did not even greatly object to their professing the grossest atheism, as long as they remained obsequious and obedient, respecting the form of government which the Pope was pleased to maintain in Rome, and of which Macaulay, writing from that city in 1838, was able to say that "the States of the Church are the worst governed in the whole civilised world."

If we glance at the situation from another point of view, we shall see that Pope Gregory, during the sixteen years of his rule, brought the Roman finances to the verge of bankruptcy. Taxation had grown to a point at which, considering the paltry salaries earned, it was more ruinous than oppressive. The budget made it clear that a financial

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disaster was at hand. An unredeemable debt for a sum amounting to eighty-eight million crowns, an annual excess of expenditure over receipts to the tune of half a million of francs a year, heavily taxed the small incomes which the restricted trade and commerce, and the exploitation of the foreigners who then, as now, crowded the neighbourhood comprised between the Via del Babuino, the Via dei Condotti, and the Piazza di Spagna, yielded to the 150,000 inhabitants of Rome.

The city itself was vastly different from the Rome of to-day. Within its sixteen miles of circuit were comprised hundreds of acres of vineyards and fields, and vast parks and gardens. The Prati di Castello, of which the jerry-builder has now made a perfect eyesore, were then covered with beautiful cypress woods interspersed with market-gardens, stretching down to the green banks of the Tiber, on which rose amidst the trees the picturesque villa of Claude Lorraine. The district, now known as the Ludovisi quarter, was then occupied by the splendid gardens belonging to Villa Ludovisi. Via Nazionale, and all the populous district on the Esquiline Hill and near San Giovanni, were then non-existent; and a church here and a convent there were the only buildings one came across in those, then fever-stricken, districts. For though Rome was then undoubtedly more picturesque, and though the most devoted admirer of modernism must confess that it has been touched in recent years neither wisely nor reverently, still it is a fact that whereas it is now statistically one of the healthiest cities in Europe, it was then one of the most unhealthy. During the summer months fever was so rife that it was considered almost suicidal to remain in Rome, and in fact not only the well-to-do, but a large

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section of the artisan population, transferred themselves with their work during August and September to the Albine and Sabine hills.

The characteristic note of this period was struck by the festas and holidays which were celebrated on every possible occasion. Amidst all this political tyranny, financial bankruptcy, and administrative disorder, the populace manifested a sceptical indifference in all matters. As long as they were able to enjoy the horse-races in Piazza Navona, varied by boating, for which purpose the piazza used to be flooded with three feet of water, and the spectacle of fireworks and balloon ascensions, as long as the Pope authorised the carnival orgies and the *Ottobrate* (October beanfeasts), with their almost pagan rites, and as long as the subventions passed on by the convents and the households of the cardinals to the indigent classes were sufficiently substantial, they were satisfied.

In aristocratic circles the prevailing dissoluteness was masked on the one hand by strict attention to religious observances, on the other by the frivolity with which all sides of life, even the most serious, were treated. The "upper ten," sceptical and pleasure-loving, took life easily, their faith was limited to externals, and all their energy was spent in amusing themselves, whilst the Academies, products of the sixteenth century which still flourished in Rome, gave the measure of their intellectual worth.

Rome was still by tradition an artistic centre, the Popes still posed as patrons of the arts; and though on the death of Canova in 1822 no really great artist remained, still Baron Camuccini, Agricola, Podesti, Coghetti, carried on the classic and academic traditions in painting,

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PLATE III

STUDY OF HEAD

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and Thorwaldsen, a foreigner by nationality, a Roman by election, in sculpture. Nor did these artists disdain to decorate the cars and design the trophies and symbolic figures for the artists' masquerades which formed an important feature in the carnival diversions. All sides of life, the political and financial bankruptcy of the state, the decadence of art and literature, the corruption of manners, were varnished over with an outward show of wealth and merriment, virtue and learning, intended to produce the illusion that this state of things could endure for ever.

It is true that in 1837 an epidemic of cholera broke out, which, for a moment, revealed the social sores in all their ugliness; but this passed by, and life once more resumed its normal course. Here and there, throughout the papal states, more especially in the turbulent Romagna, where the spirit of independence was more keenly felt than at Rome, revolts and riots had been frequent; from 1843 to 1845 revolutionary uprisings had followed one another in almost uninterrupted succession; but the Swiss Guards, the headsman, and the galleys, soon reduced the rebels to silence.

Yet, spite of the surface tranquillity, all who understood the situation agreed in thinking that the government of Pope Gregory would not have lasted a month but for the Swiss regiments. The revolution was rapidly approaching. If the majority of the inhabitants formed, like all majorities, a mass of indifference and egotism which only some great event could rouse to action, the minority—whose energy and valour more than compensated for numerical inferiority—was constantly agitating, availing itself of every opportunity for spreading the new ideas.

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Vainly the prison doors closed on the noblest thinkers, the most upright characters; the legion, sacred to the morrow, neither dwindled nor quailed; and every failure, every blow received, but added to the number of its adherents.

In June 1846 Gregory XVI. died. The news of his decease was received throughout the states of the Church with a sigh of relief, which found an echo all through Italy. The generation which had grown up under Gregory was very different from that which had preceded it, and was destined to distinguish itself by its noble idealism, energy, and patriotism. Mazzini's republican and unitarian propaganda had permeated Italy; the ideal republicanism, the enthusiasm for classical traditions, which I have noted as characterising that age and influencing the education of the young, was bearing its fruits. In the history of nations it often happens that a weak-kneed generation is succeeded by a bold and energetic one, and this was emphatically the case on this occasion; and it was this generation, composed of youths between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five, who, on the death of Gregory XVI., came to the fore, and shaking the secular apathy of the Roman people, hurried on events till they culminated in the epic heroisms of the Roman Republic of 1849.

After the black years of the papacy of Gregory XVI., years during which every thought of progress had been severely repressed, the hopes and aspirations of Italy burst forth with one accord on the announcement of the election to the papacy of Count Giovanni Mastai Ferretti, who assumed the name of Pius IX., on the 16th June 1846. As bishop of Imola the Pope was known for his liberal

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tendencies, and he had gained the sympathies and confidence of many respected liberals, chief amongst whom was the Count Pasolini; and when, as one of the first acts of his papacy, he granted an amnesty to political offenders, the enthusiasm for him throughout Italy knew no bounds. On all sides was heard but one chorus of applause. The exiled poet, Gabriele Rossetti, praised him in verse, and was ready for his sake to abandon his hatred and suspicion of the papacy; even Mazzini yielded for a time to the general rejoicing. Pius IX. was to realise the aspirations of the Abbate Rosmini and the dream of Gioberti of a free, federated Italy, under the supreme headship of the Pope, set forth in his famous work *Il Primato Morale e Civile degli Italiani.* Rarely does history offer us the spectacle of such universal hopefulness, of a people so willing and anxious to see in their ruler the impersonation of their most cherished dreams, dreams, alas, so soon to be dispelled.

Certainly it is impossible to deny the importance of the amnesty conceded by Pius IX., who, by this act, repudiated the policy of Gregory XVI., but the people read into this act much more than the Pope intended, and he, in his turn, intoxicated by the applause of the multitude, was led by his love of popularity to words and deeds by which he was not prepared to stand.

The fact is—and this is the excuse which history offers for this Pope, and for similarly dangerous and fatal men, of his own and other periods—he was unequal to the situation. A hero was required; he was—to use his own words—but "a poor country curate," one of those weak characters whom Dante, with infinite scorn, consigns to an outer Limbo, "*A Dio spiacenti, ed a' nemici sui.*"[1]

[1] Unpleasing to God and to His enemies.

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The force of circumstances compelled him to make concessions greater than he intended. The appointment, in August 1846, of Cardinal Gizzi to the position of Secretary of State, involved the subsequent appointment of other liberal ministers and functionaries, and the naming of a commission to study possible reforms. The favour with which this first move towards liberalism was received by the people led him still farther. The possibility of reforms, and the consequent discussions, brought about a diminution of the severity of the press censorship. Pamphlets and papers made their appearance. In April 1847, the Council of State, a body which was to afford representation to the provinces, was inaugurated, and in the following July the civic guard was organised in Rome. It was no longer Pius IX. who regulated events, but they which dragged him along in their wake.

Austria had from the first eyed with suspicion this Pope who seemed desirous of adopting the watchword of Julius II., "Out with the Barbarians." She now began to protest, and finding protests vain, passed to action. On the 27th July 1847, the Austrian troops crossed the frontier of the papal dominions and occupied Ferrara. A crisis, calling for decisive action, had now been reached. A hero would have seen his duty clearly laid out before him, and would not have experienced a moment's doubt; the *country curate* hesitated. To the people, who clamoured to oppose Austrian aggression by force of arms, he answered by a note which Cardinal Ferretti sent to Metternich, and which the astute Austrian minister must have laughed at, and by the formation, at Forlì, of a camp of 7000 men at the orders of a Monsignore. The Austrian government was not slow to guess that the Pope neither

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wished for war nor independence, even though he still, for the time being, allowed himself to be carried away by the popular current in favour of liberal reforms, and, four months later, on the 24th November 1847, gave his blessing to the Municipal Council of Rome, then, for the first time, constituted by virtue of a papal decree, amidst the enthusiastic applause of the multitude, who rejoiced at seeing the historic Roman municipality thus restored.

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CHAPTER III

FIRST PERIOD OF POLITICAL ACTIVITY, 1847–49

But, the reader may ask, how about Costa?

Though his family was quite opposed to revolutionary agitation, being wealthy, devout, and enjoying a much-respected position in the Rome of the Popes, Giovanni, as soon as he was of an age to have an opinion, showed himself permeated with the new ideas and ideals. He had but recently left the Collegio Bandinelli, and was not yet twenty years of age, when Pius IX. ascended the papal throne. Like most of his contemporaries, he was carried away with enthusiasm for the new pontiff who seemed to reconcile in his person respect for religion and love of country, but his young blood and impulsive nature could not long be satisfied with the slow, hesitating march of the papal reforms. Mazzini's doctrines, coinciding with the idealistic republicanism which had appealed to him from his childhood, found in Costa a ready convert. The lofty pedestal of glorious destinies on which the great Genoese patriot set the Rome of his dreams, satisfied his patriotic aspirations, and in 1847 he joined the association of Young Italy. This brought him into contact with a number of the most ardent patriots in Rome, pre-eminent amongst whom was Angelo Brunetti, better known to history by his popular nickname of *Ciceruacchio*. This man, a wine-porter by trade, had first gained popularity by his bravery in saving life during an inundation of the Tiber; and

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during all the years of agitation, culminating in the fall of the Roman republic, he, and his two youthful sons, played a prominent part, and distinguished themselves by their undaunted courage.

Costa's first appearance on the scene of politics was on the 17th April 1847, when, along with a handful of Trasteverini, he broke open the gates of the Ghetto, which for long centuries had always been closed at the hour of Ave Maria on the Jewish population. This act of revolutionary violence was symptomatic and symbolic. The barriers which religious intolerance had hitherto opposed to all forms of independent thought, were to be broken down; and the start was made with these gates of the Ghetto thus violently turned, never again to be set up, a step which led to the social emancipation of the Jews becoming an accomplished fact in Rome.

Events were now hurrying on to a crisis. 1848 opened to the ominous cry of "Viva Pio IX. *solo*." Patriots still clung to their belief in the good intentions of the Pontiff, but the hesitations and double dealing of the government had brought his counsellors into disfavour. On the 4th of March, King Charles Albert of Piedmont had granted a constitution to his kingdom; and this lent new ardour to the agitation for a constitution in Rome, with the result that Pius IX. granted one on the 19th March, under which a lay ministry, including in its numbers Marco Minghetti and Count Pasolini, was formed. The news of the five days' insurrection in Milan, of the flight of the foreign oppressors, of the declaration of war proclaimed by Charles Albert against Austria on the 23rd of March, fired the Roman patriots to claim still further reforms, and the

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Austrian flag, the hated black and yellow banner, was burnt by the populace in the Piazza del Popolo. On this occasion Nino Costa, along with Nino Castellani, Gaspare Finoli, and others, pulled down the Austrian arms from the embassy in Piazza Venezia. It was now evident that nothing would satisfy the people but to join their Italian brethren in the war of liberation; the Pope must frankly side with the national cause, or he would find himself cast aside. He was not yet prepared to sacrifice his popularity, and so, by the end of March, he decided to order General Durando, at the head of 7500 regular papal troops, to march to the Venetian frontier.

The regular troops were supplemented by volunteers, who constituted themselves into the Roman Legion, formed with the object of defending the papal states against Austrian invasion, and composed of youths burning to fight beside the Piedmontese for their country's freedom. The enrolment of volunteers, which had begun towards the end of February, now proceeded amidst ever increasing enthusiasm. The numbers who came forward were so great that the lists had to be closed through lack of arms for a greater number. In two days, on the 25th and 26th of March, 18,000 *scudi* were raised by public subscription to meet the expenses of the expedition. The tide of patriotism carried everything before it. The Pope and the Cardinals headed the list of subscriptions for the national cause; every one wished to contribute; women brought their jewels; workmen their wages; the very beggars begged for Italy.

In this movement Costa was to the fore, and he was

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amongst the first to join the Roman Legion. On the 24th March, General Durando left for the frontier, at the head of the regular troops. On the day preceding his departure, the soldiers were massed in the Piazza del Quirinale, and Pius IX., appearing on the balcony of the palace, blessed the flags. Costa was present, and we cannot do better than describe his proceedings on this occasion in his own words, as related by him to me:—

"When Pius IX., from the balcony of the Quirinal, blessed the banners, saying, 'Great God, bless Italy,' I and my friend, Nino Castellani, were present amongst the crowd. After the ceremony, we rushed straight off to the Ghetto (now destroyed), where all the second-hand dealers then dwelt, and we bought ourselves two military knapsacks. Provided with these, we jumped into a carriage, and, tying a tricolour flag to the end of a walking-stick, we drove all over Rome, spreading the news that the time had come to go off and fight against the Austrians."

On the 25th and 26th, the volunteers, to the number of 2300, under the command of General Ferrari, left for the frontier. Costa was a corporal in the fourth company of the Roman Legion, to which his friend Castellani also belonged; in the third company was Lieutenant Frederick Mason, brother of the painter, George, with whom Costa was to form an intimate artistic friendship as soon as politics allowed him to return to the fine arts. Costa remembered him as a singularly handsome young man, of noble and courageous bearing—one of the many Englishmen who, in those years of travail, were willing to lay down their lives in the service

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of their heart's home, Italy. In order to set a good example to the troops, these young men marched on foot the whole of the long journey at the head of their companies, resisting the temptation to provide themselves with horses, which their means would have permitted of their doing. By the time the Legion had reached Bologna its numbers had swelled to over twelve thousand. In Bologna they were kept waiting nearly a month, as the whole conduct of the disastrous wars of 1848 was characterised by hesitation and wearisome delay on the part of the generals in command, who, acting on the vacillating orders of their princes, Pius IX. and Charles Albert, seemed to aim at tiring out the enthusiasm and cooling the ardour of the young and inexperienced troops at their orders. At last came the command to march, and the Legion crossed the Po, and entered Venetian territory. The first halt was made at Treviso, where General Ferrari joined General Durando, in the beginning of May, in the hopes that their joint forces might be able to save Belluno and Feltre, threatened by the Austrians under General Nugent. These two towns, however, fell—the first, on the 5th of May; the second, two days later. General Durando, hoping to prevent the junction of Nugent and Radetzky, spread out his forces along the rivers Brenta and the Lower Piave, neglecting, however, to provide the means for a rapid concentration in case one or other of the divisions was attacked. On the 8th of May, Nugent attacked the Roman Legion, under Ferrari, stationed at Cornudo. The volunteers, now for the first time under fire, fought with great heroism against the far superior numbers of the Austrians. They were

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attacked on the evening of the 8th, and resisted without retreating an inch till four o'clock the following afternoon, trusting all the time that help would arrive from General Durando, who had sent to say that "he was hurrying to their assistance." As, however, no help came, they had to retreat to Treviso, where they were again attacked by two columns, commanded by General Nugent, till the arrival of Durando compelled the enemy to change tactics, and attack Vicenza. Hither the papal forces, both regulars and volunteers, retired to prepare the defence of the city.

During the defence of Vicenza the Roman volunteers distinguished themselves by their dauntless courage. Costa, in his capacity of corporal, headed a sortie against the enemy, and, for the valour and discernment which he then displayed, he was promoted sergeant on the spot. All day long the unequal fight raged, and the enemy was repeatedly repulsed; for five hours the Italians held the overwhelming forces of the Croats at bay, and only when Marshal Radetzky, with a fresh contingent of 12,000 men and twenty-four cannon, arrived on the scene, was it clear that numbers would ultimately prevail.

Costa was in constant peril the whole day, but on this occasion, as all through his life, his lucky star protected him. He was not wounded then, nor was he ever on subsequent occasions, though all round him the ground was strewn with the dead and dying. The mortality amongst the Italians was very great, owing partly to the fact that the papal troops wore metal helmets which shone in the sunlight, permitting the enemy to sight them; Costa, who was not wearing such a helmet, attributed his safety in a certain measure to that fact.

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It is curious how, even amidst the most important events, some small incident will strike the attention and remain vivid to one through life. Thus, Costa always remembered having noted during this fight two brothers, soldiers belonging to the regiment of the Swiss Guards, who were fighting by his side; one of them fell mortally wounded, and the other exclaiming, "Oh, my poor brother," knelt beside him, and placed his wine-flask in the hand of the dying man, who had already raised to his lips, with his other, his own flask, so that the poor fellow died with a bottle in each hand. His brother fell shortly afterwards.

During the conflict the colonel of his regiment, Tomaso del Grande, rested his telescope on Costa's shoulder in order to sight the enemy; hardly had he finished, and Costa stepped aside, when a Congreve shell, directed against the Roman ranks, glanced aside against the wall of a house, and burst at the feet of Del Grande, who fell dead before Costa. With his men he lifted the dead officer up, and wrapping him in his cloak, carried him out of the lines.

In the evening the city capitulated, and on the morrow the Roman Legion left with full military honours.

Costa and his little company of eight men—amongst whom a young painter, by name Valentini, who, from Berlin, where he was prosperously settled, had returned to Italy to fight for his country—had passed the night watching the body of their colonel. In the morning they left a little after the departure of the rest of the Roman Legion, and the eight men with their sergeant, bearing on their shoulders the corpse of Del Grande, marched past the Austrian General D'Aspré. One of the Austrian

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officers was standing by in shirt-sleeves, his cap on his head, his whole attitude one of disrespect. Costa turned on him, exclaiming, "Hats off! this is a hero who has died for his country." As they passed the Austrians inquired of him the number of their dead; the only answer vouchsafed was, "Count your own."

And now began a tragi-comic progress of the small band from Vicenza to Rome, bearing their dead commander to his last rest; the many semi-humorous incidents of which can only be understood rightly when we remember the extreme youth of the patriotic soldier. The company marched from Vicenza to Mestre, where they arrived with tremendous appetites, only to find that there was nothing to eat; the Austrians had already passed through there, and the little company had also been preceded by their comrades of the Roman Legion. Costa set out to find food for his hungry men; but wherever he applied he was met with the same answer. "The cupboard was bare," but he was determined that it should not be said, "And so the poor soldier had none." At last he entered a peasant's house where the housewife was just serving out the "polenta" (a sort of porridge of maize), and he unceremoniously walked off with the pot full, consoling the surprised peasants by remarking philosophically, "Out of sight, out of mind." In relating this anecdote Costa used to note that these difficulties did not arise from ill-will on the part of the inhabitants, who, on the contrary, at all the places they passed through, vied with each other in offering entertainment to the patriot soldiers.

At Mestre they were able to provide themselves with a cart on which to place the coffin containing the remains of their colonel, which they had so far carried on their

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shoulders. At Ferrara this cart was exchanged for a two-horse omnibus, and there, spite of the opposition offered by the clergy, they constructed an inclined platform leading to the church, up which they dragged the omnibus with the coffin, and after one of the eight had delivered a funeral oration in honour of the deceased, they left the coffin in the church for the night. The next day they quitted Ferrara, accompanied, so that no due honour to the dead should be omitted, by a chaplain, Don Felice Spola, a Piedmontese priest of elastic conscience and not too strict morals. In each town or village the little band passed through, they placed the coffin in the church for the night, and Don Felice celebrated a funeral mass, whilst the dead man's comrades took it by turns to pronounce a funeral oration. Spola's conduct, however, in the houses where he was quartered, was such as to give rise to complaints, and he even showed himself capable of infringing the duties imposed by hospitality. Costa, on hearing of this, took him aside and warned him: "Take care, Spola; if you behave unworthily we shall have to dismiss you with a thrashing, but if you behave well and accompany us to Rome, I will see that you are promoted bishop *in partibus*." These words were not without their due effect, and later on Costa more than fulfilled his share of the bargain. At Bologna the omnibus was exchanged for a hearse drawn by four horses; and at Ancona, Costa and his men were given a splendid reception. From thence to Rome their march was a triumphal procession; and on their arrival in the city the legionaries seized in the Piazza del Gesù, the convent of the Jesuits who had been expelled from the States of the Church by Pius IX. in March 1848, and in the sumptuous church of the order, they had a

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PLATE IV

TWO STUDIES

In the possession of the Costa family

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solemn funeral mass celebrated for the repose of the soul of Del Grande, who was, at last, laid to rest.

On their return to Rome the legionaries found that a great change had come over the political scene. By the encyclical of 29th April, Pius IX. had declared that in his character of head of the Church and vicar of the Prince of Peace, he could not make war on a catholic power, and had thus definitely shown that he did not intend to join in the war of liberation. But not even then was his conduct clear and straightforward. He still continued undecided, withdrawing to-day that which yesterday he had conceded.

Hardly had the parliament, elected under the new constitution, opened its sittings on the 5th June 1848, when the incompatibility between a constitutional government and a King-Pope became apparent. The parliament, backed by public opinion, at the news of the capitulation of Vicenza, clamoured loudly for energetic measures with a view to a vigorous prosecution of hostilities, whilst the Pope merely reconfirmed his intention not to make war on a Catholic prince. Hence ever-increasing popular dissatisfaction, which gave rise to threatening disturbances and riotous disorder. In all these insurrectionary movements the returned survivors of the volunteer regiments took a prominent part. The most advanced and revolutionary section of these volunteers had formed themselves into an association known as the "Teste d'Argento"—Silver Heads—which constituted a constant menace to public order; and a few of their number, amongst them Costa and Luigi Grandoni, were anxious to organise and discipline this turbulent force, capable of forming so powerful an instrument either for good or evil, into a Legion of

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Survivors (*Reduci*). In this object they succeeded. Costa was offered the rank of captain in the new regiment, an honour which he refused, faithful to the rule which guided his life, and which was to serve his country and the cause of freedom whenever occasion offered, but neither to aspire after nor to accept promotions or honours. Grandoni, however, was pleased to accept the rank of major.

In the meantime the Pope, after much hesitation, had decided to call to the ministry the man whom the Abbate Rosmini had pointed out to him as capable of reconciling the Papacy with constitutional liberty, Pellegrino Rossi, a man of liberal ideas and firm character, who had long been devoted to the Italian cause. This step, like most of the decisions taken by Pius, pleased no one; it was not at all to the liking of the ultra-clerical party, known in Rome as the Sanfedisti; nor was it popular with the extremists, who saw in Rossi a representative of hated moderatism. The 15th of November was the day appointed for the opening of Parliament, and Rossi, as Minister of the Interior and of Finance, was to open the session. By a manifesto which he had published in the official *Gazette* on the 14th, he had made himself more than ever unpopular with the advanced party, for in it he had notified his intention to suppress with the utmost severity all attempts made against the safety of the State. Rumours were freely circulated to the effect that an attempt would be made on his life, but Rossi showed himself incredulous of all such, and refused an escort of carabineers to accompany him to the *Cancelleria*, where the Chamber held its sittings; in fact he refused to observe precautions of any sort, saying to those who warned him to be prudent, "If they want

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my life, you may be sure they will get it one way or another."

On the morning of the 15th November, Luigi Grandoni, who, through his association with the Legion of Survivors, was in the secrets of the extremist party, went round to Costa in a state of great agitation and informed him that a plot had been hatched to assassinate Rossi on his entering the Chamber; and he begged of his friend to accompany him in order to try and prevent its execution. Costa, horrified at the news, consented, and together they rushed off to the *Cancelleria*, only to find that they could not gain admittance owing to the great crowd which thronged the entrance to the building. They withdrew, wishing to leave and see what could be done elsewhere, but as they were departing they were hustled back into the courtyard of the *Cancelleria* by the carriage of Pellegrino Rossi, and at that moment a crowd, wearing the uniform of the Survivors of Vicenza, rushed forward, pushing them aside, and shouting, "Here is Rossi! here is Rossi!" The carriage passed through the gates, and stopped in front of Costa and Grandoni. Rossi alighted; he was toying with a walking-cane, and his face wore a half smile of defiance and disdain. Spite of the warnings he had received, he did not believe that the Revolutionists would dare to touch him. He was followed by his secretary, Righetti. Hardly had he alighted when Costa heard a cry, "Oh, the assassins!" He saw Rossi surrounded by the crowd; a man dealt him a blow in the ribs with the hilt of his dagger, and as the victim turned to face his assailant two other blows were aimed at him, one of which caught him in the neck, severing the jugular vein and the carotid. Instantly a man in the crowd threw the cloak of

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a National Guardsman over him who had dealt the fatal blow, and the assassin escaped through the crowd. Costa threw himself into the fray, shouting, "Stop! political assassination is infamous!" At this the conspirators turned on Costa, but, fortunately for him, Grandoni began to cry out, apostrophising the crowd, "So, you have killed him, scoundrels; see, what a fountain of blood." This turned attention from Costa to his friend, and it would have gone ill with Grandoni had not Costa, with quick presence of mind, taken him by the arm, and walked him off, saying in a threatening tone, "Leave him to me, I will settle his account for him." Thanks to this stratagem, they both managed to make good their escape. In the case of Grandoni, however, this episode was to prove fatal; for, though his presence on this occasion was due to his anxiety to prevent, if possible, the execution of the murder, he was, after the restoration of the Papal power, in 1854, arrested as an accomplice in the assassination of Rossi, and condemned to death. At the trial Costa bravely came forward and deposed in favour of his friend, but to no avail. The sentence was never actually carried out, for on the day preceding that fixed for the execution Grandoni was found strangled in his cell, a supposed case of suicide.

The assassination of Pellegrino Rossi had the effect desired by both extreme parties, the Sanfedisti and the Republicans, it rendered the *statu quo* untenable. It was said that had Rossi been allowed to explain his programme to the parliament, he would have succeeded in reconciling the Papacy with constitutional liberty. It is highly questionable whether he, or any one else, could have performed such a feat, which would be the squaring of the circle in politics; but it was dreaded none the less by the

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Jesuits, who wished to rid themselves of the new minister, availing themselves for this purpose of the extreme liberals, whose real aim was the total abolition of the temporal power. Costa was of opinion that the group who prepared and executed the assassination of Rossi belonged to the Teste d'Argento, who were responsible for the tumults which had previously convulsed the city. The identity of the actual assassins has been a matter of much discussion and uncertainty. Costa, as an eye-witness, told me that the man who dealt the fatal blow was Gigi Brunetti, son of Ciceruacchio; the man who covered the assassin with the cloak of the National Guardsman was a certain Micoceto. In Costa's words, these Teste d'Argento were patriots and (in their way) heroes, but they belonged to another and more barbarous age, when political assassination was considered justifiable, nay meritorious. They were nearly all beheaded later on, many of them being implicated in other cases of political assassination.

The murder of Pellegrino Rossi was followed up on the morrow by a popular uprising, which narrowly escaped becoming a revolution. On the morning of the 16th November, an immense crowd, which the civic guard, the soldiers, and the carabineers had joined, marched on the Quirinal, calling on the Pope to name a democratic ministry, and call a constituent assembly. The Papal Palace was defended by the Swiss Guards, the only body which remained faithful to the Government. The populace, however, was in no mood to submit tamely to Pius's refusal to accede to their wishes. All the leaders of the advanced liberals were on the scene of action, Ciceruacchio and his sons, Federico Torre, Luigi Grandoni, Costa,

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Luigi Galli, destined to distinguish himself as a painter of talent; he died only a few years ago in a state of abject poverty. Led by this latter, the populace attacked and disarmed the Swiss Guards, who had begun open hostilities by firing the first shot. Monsignor Palma, reputed one of the authors of the reactionary encyclical of the 29th April, stepped out on to a balcony of the Quirinal in order to see what was going on, and was shot dead by a stray bullet. Already a cannon had been placed in position, and one of the sons of Ciceruacchio was ready to fire it against the entrance to the Quirinal, had not Federico Torre placed himself at its mouth to prevent this outrage. At last the Pope, yielding to violence, satisfied the demands of the insurrectionists, by calling to the ministry Giuseppe Galletti, a name popular with the advanced party.

The flight to Gaeta was now but a question of days. On the 24th November 1848, only two years and five months from the day when he had been proclaimed Pope amidst the wild enthusiasm of the people from one end of Italy to the other, Pius IX., disguised in the costume of a simple priest, fled from Rome in the carriage of the Countess of Spaur. *Sic transit gloria mundi.*

The tragedy was hurrying on to its crisis.

On the 9th February 1849 the National Assembly, which had been convoked in Rome about the beginning of the month, proclaimed from the Capitol the fall of the temporal power of the Papacy, and the creation of the Roman Republic. And in the first days of March, Mazzini, summoned by a telegram from Goffredo Mameli containing the sole words, "Rome republic, come," entered for the first time, by the Porta del Popolo, the Eternal City.

Costa now first met the great republican, of whom he

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PLATE V

STUDY FOR "CHARCOAL BURNERS DANCING"

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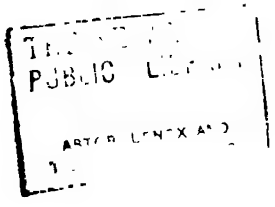

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was then an ardent follower, and for whom, though later on he differed from him on questions of policy, he always professed the most profound respect, a respect which was mutual, for Mazzini more than once expressed himself in most affectionate terms about Costa. Our artist judged Mazzini as a man in advance of his age, one who, unlike the self-seeking and ambitious type of politician all too well known, did not believe it possible to regenerate a nation without the help of elevated and religious ideals. These, in his opinion, offered the only means of moralising a people in decadence. Costa regretted that ultimately Mazzini allowed himself to be carried away by mystical abstractions, which, he considered, lowered the standard of his ideals by basing them on a shadowy conception of an unknown God, and on that of a people still to be regenerated. A religion, to be vital, must be founded on the martyrdom of its apostles; for Mazzini's mission to be complete he should, Costa said, have lived in the midst of this people, dying a martyr at its own hands. Christianity would never have triumphed had not Christ died forgiving His persecutors; and though surely, if ever a man did, Mazzini drank to the dregs the cup of bitterness, still Costa maintained that for the triumph of his ideas a still more patent sacrifice was needed. Moreover the purely abstract religious conceptions of Mazzini could never have appealed widely to a Southern people; they were too much lacking in form, in all that external symbolism which lays hold of the imagination, and on which the passionate, beauty-loving Latins insist. That Mazzini was far from ignoring this vital fact is proved by the following anecdote.

During the brief rule of the Triumvirs, spite of the dreadful odds against which the Republic had to fight,

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almost perfect order reigned in the city; a fact to which Mr. Henry Lushington, though far from well-disposed towards the new régime, had to testify, writing that life and property were far safer under the revolutionists than under the old Papal rule. In order to keep the populace calm and sustain its *morale*, Mazzini was particularly desirous that none of the outward ceremonies of the Church should be omitted, and with this end in view he was most anxious to have the benediction given as usual to the crowd from the balcony of St. Peter's on Easter Day. But the difficulty was, who was to give it? The Pope, on flying to Gaeta, had left no substitute to fill his place, and how find a priest ready to expose himself to the danger of ultimate reprisals by performing this important ceremony? It was then that Costa came to the rescue, and mindful of his former promise to the Piedmontese chaplain who had followed the remains of Colonel del Grande, he assured Mazzini that he could find him his man, and set out for Don Felice Spola. He soon settled everything satisfactorily with this worthy prelate. "Spola," he said, "I promised you to see that you were promoted bishop *in partibus;* I come to tell you that, if you wish, I can make you Pope." The result of the negotiations was that Spola agreed to give the benediction in consideration of a sum of thirty scudi[1] (perhaps suggested to him by Judas's thirty pieces of silver), and so on the 8th April 1849, during the brief truce which the French conceded to the young Republic, the vast Piazza of St. Peter's assumed its accustomed aspect of great festal days. The devout Roman crowd, amongst them the many peasants in the bright and picturesque costumes of the neighbouring Ciociaria, who

[1] A scudi is equivalent to four shillings.

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always strike so characteristic a note, crowded the huge square, in which were drawn up in squadrons the republican troops, and amidst the salvoes of the artillery, and the solemn booming of the great bells, the apostolic benediction was given from the balcony over the central doorway of the mighty cathedral. Costa was standing beside Mazzini, who, with the other two Triumvirs, Aurelio Saffi and Armelini, was standing watching the ceremony under the *loggia* of the Swiss Guards. Mazzini stood speechless, impressed by the great spectacle offered by the huge kneeling crowd, and, turning to Costa, he exclaimed, "It is useless; this religion lives and will yet live for long years to come, on account of the greatness and beauty of its form." To conclude the anecdote I may state that after the restoration of Pius IX. poor Don Felice Spola was seized by the officers of the Holy Inquisition, and disappeared for ever from human ken.

The advent of Mazzini was followed, at a short interval, by that of Garibaldi, a hero famous already in two worlds, who, with his Legionaries, entered the city towards the end of April. The sculptor Gibson, who was then in Rome, describes the spectacle offered by these wild-looking warriors as they rode in, as one of the strangest ever witnessed in the Eternal City. The men, sunburnt, with long, unkempt hair, wearing conical-shaped hats with black, waving plumes; their gaunt, dust-soiled faces framed with shaggy beards; their legs bare; crowding round their chief, who rode a white horse, perfectly statuesque in his virile beauty; the whole group looking more like a company of brigands out of some picture by Salvator Rosa, than a disciplined military force.

Costa, who had been elected member of the muni-

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cipality, which was composed entirely of Romans, placed his house at San Francesco a Ripa at the disposal of the general, who turned it into his head-quarters for a few days. Here Costa had the opportunity to become intimately acquainted with the hero and with his epic Legion; here he first knew the patriot monk, Ugo Bassi; the brave moor, Anghiar; General Giacomo Medici, under whom he was to fight at the heroic defence of the *Vascello*, and the others who belonged to the world-famous Italian Legion. Garibaldi, who possessed in a high degree that instinct which belongs to the born leader, and which prompted him to pick out the best men, at once placed Costa on his staff, and on the 30th April he was with the brigade commanded by the general when it attacked the second column of the French forces, under General Oudinot, a mile outside Porta San Pancrazio.

On that memorable day, when the French, after declaring that "Italians do not fight," were defeated and repulsed in disorder by the Republican forces, Costa, with a handful of men, was entrusted with the defence of a house hard by the Villa Panfili, whither at last, overcome by numbers, they were forced to retreat, and which they stubbornly held against three hundred Frenchmen. Fortunately, in the nick of time, just as their forces were thoroughly exhausted, the little band of fighters was reinforced by two other companies of the Legion, and thus they were enabled to take prisoners the entire body of the enemy, amongst whom Costa especially remembered a certain drum-major, who impressed his artist's eye as being a singularly handsome and well-developed man of magnificent bearing.

The success which crowned their efforts on this occa-

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sion fired all with renewed energy and enthusiasm. It was indeed an exceptional body of men which had foregathered in the Eternal City, determined that if Fate forbade that victory should be theirs, defeat, at least, should be glorious, and worthy of the noblest traditions of antique virtue. Young men, whose very physique seemed to stamp them as set apart from the vulgar herd—Luciano Manara, with his six hundred Lombard Bersaglieri; the Bolognese Angelo Masini, who, from being one of the most noted of the *jeunesse dorée* of his town, was converted by the fervour of patriotism, and was destined to die beneath the walls of Rome, a victim to his intrepid audacity; the patriot poet, Goffredo Mameli, compatriot of Mazzini, whose songs were the battle-hymns of young Italy; and many, many other noble names—all with hearts aflame with the purest idealism, unsullied by the slightest taint of personal ambition or sordid aims. Garibaldi was the life and soul of the defence; and if a more or less narrow feeling had not led the Romans to name a Roman, Rosselli, as general-in-chief, there is little doubt that, whatever the ultimate result might have been, the immediate successes gained by the Republic would have been greater. Talking over old times with his doctor and friend, Dottre. Scipione Francati, in the retirement of Caprera, the general once said, "I have always had brave youths at my command, but we shall never again set our eye on any like those of 1848–49."

The repulse of General Oudinot on the 30th April was followed by a month's truce; this was passed in diplomatic negotiations with the French, who were anxious to gain time by any expedient that might offer, and in dispersing the Bourbon army, which King Ferdinand of

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Naples had sent against Rome. During this time the Roman municipality was not idle; it had before it the arduous task of provisioning the city, so as to permit of its standing the expected siege, and of preparing the fortifications and making them accessible for purposes of defence by means of platforms, which were constructed so as to enable the combatants to man them. On both of these tasks Costa was employed. The commission charged with the victualling of Rome, to which he belonged, did its work so well that during the whole length of the short-lived Republic there was never any scarcity in the city; the municipality strained every nerve to meet the necessities of the hour, and the needs of the poorer classes were its especial care; indeed, it was only on the return of the Pope-King that hard times began to make themselves felt. Nor did the populace show themselves unworthy of the name of Romans: they observed almost perfect order, and helped to their best in the work of defence. The great majority of the inhabitants at this period were followers of Mazzini's doctrines, and no fewer than thirty thousand were inscribed on the rolls of Young Italy. Costa remembered that on one occasion during the siege several thousand *popolani* met, anxious to be allowed to attack the French, though armed only with their knives, the traditional weapon of the Roman proletarian. This offer, naturally, could not be accepted by the Triumvirs, but the daring bravery which inspired it is none the less commendable.

On the morning of the 3rd June, General Oudinot renewed hostilities, attacking unexpectedly, before the expiration of the truce, the important outposts of the *Casino dei Quattro Venti* and the *Vascello*, both outside

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Porta San Pancrazio, on the Janiculum. These positions were, at the first surprise, captured by the French, but later on in the day they were retaken by the Republicans. Three times the enemy assaulted the *Casino dei Quattro Venti*, in the defence of which Costa took part, and three times they were repulsed. The Italians fought with all the energy of despair; the house, which was constructed with open *loggias*, one on each side, was riddled with French balls; its defenders piled up the dead bodies of their comrades as barricades, behind which they fired, but the overwhelming numbers of the enemy were bound to prevail. Of the sixty heroes who had accompanied Garibaldi from Monte Video more than one fell here, and here, too, met their deaths the Italian Tyrtæus, Goffredi Mameli, and the intrepid Angelo Masini, whose body lay where it fell, unburied, during the whole length of the siege, as the French and Italian shells, which swept the space day and night, prevented all approach.

The *Vascello*, defended by Medici and his Lombards, now became the chief stronghold of resistance, and here again we find Costa, who for three days shared the fate of the heroic little band which had shut themselves in that villa, and which, for nearly a month, till the 30th of June, held the French army at bay, only leaving when all resistance had become impossible, and when the walls, riddled with French shot, were falling all around the handful of survivors.

During all this period our artist was in constant peril, but at the age of twenty-two, with brain and heart aflame with patriotism, and dreams of honour and glory, such a man does not hesitate to expose himself to danger, and, in Costa's own words, "heroism had become a matter of

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habit." One can get accustomed even to the incessant thundering of cannon, and to the daily and hourly risk of receiving a bullet in one's head, a danger to which Costa was constantly exposed, only escaping thanks to that singular good fortune which always attended his steps on similar occasions. But all around him his comrades fell fast, and he recollected with a shudder how, whilst at the *Vascello*, he was called away from his post for a minute, and replaced by a friend, only to find him on his return shattered against the wall by a French cannon-ball.

Besides his actual services as a soldier, Costa was constantly engaged during this period of the siege, in his capacity of member of the municipality, in foraging the surrounding country for provisions; no easy task when we remember that to leave or enter the city he had to pass between the French forces stationed on the heights of the Janiculum, and the Spanish army, which had come to support the claims of the Pope, and which guarded the Tiber from Fiumicino upwards. But the spice of danger certainly did not make these expeditions less attractive to the spirited young man, and he was able to appreciate the picturesque side of these excursions into the desolate and solitary Campagna, whose vast spaces, and sweeping lines of distant purple and amethyst-coloured hills, were to become such a favourite note in his future artistic work. He always remembered with a sense of pleasure one particular occasion when, in the company of the *mercante di campagna* (merchant farmer), Luigi Silvestrelli, mounted on horseback, and armed with the goad, the characteristic *Pungolo* of the Roman *Buttero*, he drove into the city three hundred head of wild cattle.

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But the inevitable end was approaching. On the night of the 29th of June, the feast of St. Peter, observed as a public holiday in Rome, in the midst of a tremendous storm, whilst the contending artilleries raged fiercer and louder than the very thunder, the French entered the walls of the Eternal City. To relate the events of the last hours of the defence would be to chronicle a series of heroic deeds which make this page of modern history read more like a canto of Homer or Virgil than a sober narration of facts. Anghiar, the faithful Moor, met his death; the heroic Luciano Manara fell fighting at Villa Spada; Medici still held out amidst the crumbling ruins of the Vascello, determined not to retreat unless commanded so to do by the General; Garibaldi performed prodigies of valour—and all these young lives were willingly, nay joyfully sacrificed, and to what end? "Not," as the Countess Martinengo Cesaresco well phrases it in her admirable book, "The Liberation of Italy," "not for interest or fame, not even in the hope of winning; but that, erect and crowned with the roses of martyrdom, Rome might send her dying salutation to the world."

On the 30th June, Garibaldi, summoned from the midst of the *melée* to the Assembly, where he appeared bloodstained, his clothes riddled with bullets and bayonet thrusts, had to declare that the defence could no further be prolonged; and on the 4th July the French made their official entry into the conquered—the unconquered—city.

Thus ended by no means the least of the heroic episodes of the world's history; one in which our artist played no insignificant part. Truly is it said that some defeats are more glorious than any victory.

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CHAPTER IV

FIRST PERIOD OF ARTISTIC ACTIVITY, 1849-59

WITH the fall of the Republic and with the entry of the victorious French troops, Rome once more returned to its secular inertia, became once again, after the brief, heroic interlude, the imperturbable, the Eternal City. And now that, at least for the time being, all hopes of successful patriotic action had to be abandoned, now that all seemed lost, and nothing could be done but wait and hope, Giovanni Costa, freed for the moment from his duties as a citizen, was able to devote himself exclusively to his other ruling passion—his art. The period which we are now going to examine, which includes the ten years from 1849 to 1859, was to prove the most important of his life, for it was to determine his artistic personality and fit him for the rôle of innovator and reformer which he was destined to play in modern Italian painting.

The active part he had taken in the revolution made it a matter of prudence for Costa to withdraw from Rome on the restoration of the clerical government. Pius IX., who only re-entered his capital in April 1850, had not dwelt for so many months under the protection of the Bourbon king without becoming tainted with the reactionary and treacherous policy which characterised that monarch, and which infected all who surrounded him; and although the influential position and orthodox opinions of our artist's family afforded him considerable protection,

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PLATE VI

"MUSIC IN THE WOOD"

In the possession of the Costa family

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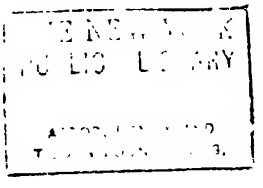

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his name was nevertheless on the black list, and he fled the city, taking refuge amongst the wild solitudes and thick woods of the Fajola and Ariccia in the Roman Campagna.

If prudence was one of the prime motives for this move, artistic considerations held scarcely a second place. Already in 1847, at which date he had begun that study of a hazel wood already mentioned as the first picture that he started on his own lines of study, he had come to the conclusion that academies and schools could not teach him what he wished to learn, and that he must work and study from Nature at first hand. But, for the time being, events had called him from his brush, and patriotism had claimed precedence over art; now that he was once more free, it was only natural that he should take up his studies where he had left them.

During the next ten years he lived almost continuously in the Campagna, but at the same time he came into the city not infrequently. He had taken a studio at No. 33 Via Margutta, still the artists' street in Rome, which he first occupied in 1852, and which witnessed a full half century of his life. He only gave it up in the summer of 1902, when his failing health had already confined him to his spacious and luminous rooms in the Palazzo Odescalchi.

In order that the reader may understand his position with regard to the papal government during these years, it is necessary to remember that, subsequent to 1849, there were, as our artist himself told me, always two Costas, one Giovanni Costa, republican and conspirator, correctly buttoned up in the frock-coat of the period, known as a dangerous character, and whose name figured in the black

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list of the Revolutionists of 1849, and another Nino Costa, painter, carelessly dressed in velvet coat and soft felt hat. He passed the greater part of his time in the country, and when in Rome his life was frankly and avowedly that of an artist; and the society he frequented was that of his comrades of the brush, amongst whom at this period were many young foreigners destined to fame. In their company Nino Costa used to haunt the Caffè Greco in the Via dei Condotti, then the recognised resort of the artists of the day, where the English sculptor Gibson presided, and which was frequented by the Bohemian world, artistic, literary, and musical. Another resort of his was the Trattoria della Lepre, then patronised principally by foreigners. In this way he did not arouse the suspicions of the papal police, and was free to go and come much as he pleased, and, as we shall see, he even managed, when he wished, to talk politics and organise conspiracies in the studio in Via Margutta. But, above all, the comparative immunity from persecution which he enjoyed was due to the influence of his family. His brother Antonio was an officer under General Antonelli, then military governor of Rome, and brother of the cardinal of that name, all-powerful under Pius IX.; to his good offices was due the fact that Costa was not immediately arrested on the fall of the Republic.

Towards 1850, the Roman Campagna had become a centre towards which artists of all nationalities were drawn, some attracted by the pretty and conventional subjects of *ciociarine* and shepherds disporting themselves amidst the romantic scenery of the Campagna, with, for background, the grandiose ruins of ancient aqueducts and

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tombs; others again excited by the solemn and impressive beauty of the country, the sweeping lines of plain and distant hills, the graceful and picturesque peasantry, the simple, patriarchal life. One of the chief centres of these artistic colonies was the Pension Martorelli at Ariccia, between Albano and Nemi, bordering on the forests of that name, and near the wide expanse of the *macchia della Fajola*. The scenery is still amongst the most romantically beautiful in Italy, and was then perhaps even more so in its untouched loveliness. It was there that Costa fixed his headquarters.

At the Pension Martorelli Costa came into contact with some of the most famous artists of the day, who in the summer months, attracted by the peculiar charm of the scenery and the easy proximity to Rome, foregathered in great numbers. Here he became acquainted with the Germans, Cornelius and Overbeck, then at the height of their reputation. They were surrounded by quite a court of admiring compatriots, amongst whom were the famous historical painter, Piloty, and a certain Kraus whose name remained in Costa's memory. This artist used to talk about the necessity of finding the key to the Beautiful, and maintained that, so far, the discovery of this key was the exclusive privilege of a friend of his, an artist, Rottermann, whose fame, however, spite of this notable speciality, does not seem to have come down to posterity. With the cold, formal style, and metaphysical theories on the Beautiful and the Good in art of which these Germans were the exponents, Costa had but scant sympathy, and closer knowledge of them and their ideas only served to confirm him in his own convictions. Here, too, he again came in contact with the romantic personality of Massimo d'Azeglio,

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who had been one of his comrades at the heroic defence of Vicenza, and who, after resigning his position as minister of the Piedmontese king in 1852, had resumed his artist's life in the Campagna. Another of Costa's companions at the Pension Martorelli, and one of whom he preserved many memories, was a Dane, Meyer, head of the then favourite Roman genre school. This artist was already well on in years when Costa knew him, and he seems to have been rather a butt for the jokes and good stories of the younger generation. Of such stories, Costa till the last related with much gusto the following two :—

The good Dane, it appears, was distressed at bearing so common a surname. To mention the name Meyer was like speaking of Smith in England, and conveyed no definite impression ; and this was galling to his dignity. A remedy had to be found ; and so, in order to distinguish himself from the vulgar herd of Meyers, he determined to make a balloon ascent. Ballooning in those days was a very rare feat, and henceforth he would have been known as *Meyer of the balloon.* As soon as he had settled on the scheme, he hastened to put it into execution, and many weeks had not elapsed before he managed to carry it out. When he was already on high, he turned to the aeronaut who accompanied him and inquired of the man his name ; the fatal answer came—Meyer! Not even in mid-air was he to be unique among his kind.

Living so much in the country, and anxious to ingratiate himself with the peasants whose life formed the subject matter of his artistic productions, Meyer always made a great point of regular attendance at Mass, and he was a familiar figure in the villages round Rome, hurriedly hobbling along (for he was lame of foot) on his way to the

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church, inquiring of the villagers if the Mass "was still good," *ancora buona*. On one occasion the bishop of the diocese came on a pastoral visit to the place where Meyer was staying, and hearing on all hands great accounts of the exemplary piety of the foreign artist, he invited him to dinner, and in the course of conversation, congratulated his guest on his punctuality in the performance of his religious duties, winding up with the remark that nowadays the Germans were more devout than the Italians, who had become worse than animals, worse than wild beasts, worse than the very Jews! Meyer was himself a Jew!

At the Pension Martorelli Costa also met the French painter, Français, and the great Corot, with whom he was again to come into close contact some years later in Paris; and amongst the younger artists, Boecklin, then first acquiring that love of the romantic Italian scenery which was to be such a determining factor in his artistic temperament; and, notable in his life's friendships, George Mason, with whose brother Frederick he had already been brought into the close communion of a common ideal in the ranks of the Roman Legion in 1848. It was towards 1852 that Costa first became acquainted with George Mason at the Pension at Ariccia. The Englishman had just lost a considerable fortune, and finding himself cast on his own resources, he had determined to take up painting, which he had till then studied as an amateur, and pursue it as a serious profession, a decision which all lovers of English art must always rejoice at, for Mason has enriched our art with works of extraordinary beauty, landscapes in which man is put into his true relationship with nature, replete with sentiment, with a true feeling for line and

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colour. The influence which these two painters exercised over each other during these years, so important in fixing their artistic personality, was very great, and it was from Costa that Mason received the inspiration to become a painter of the Roman Campagna which was to be the scene of his first artistic triumphs. When they first met, Costa had just begun his important picture, "Women on the Seashore at Porto d'Anzio," of which we shall have occasion to speak again, and Mason was greatly impressed by this work. But the man to whom both these young artists were most indebted for inspiration was an English artist of whom we must now speak.

It was during these years in the Campagna that Costa came into contact with the man who, of all others, was to exercise the strongest influence over his artistic development, the founder of the school of which Costa in Italy and Mason in England were to be the chief exponents, and who was known among his friends as the Father of the Campagna Romana school, Charles Coleman.

This remarkable artist was an Englishman, a native of Pontefract, in Yorkshire, and in 1831, when twenty-four years of age, he had come to Rome with the intention of studying the great works of the Renaissance in the galleries and churches of the Eternal City. Though born in an age of academies, when studio light and studio effects were considered essential to the painter, art was to him a very living fact, and though he could and did admire the great works of the past, he soon felt that not slavish imitation, but patient and sincere observation of nature was the true education for the artist. The sweeping lines and rolling expanses of the Campagna, the herds of buffaloes and wild horses that range its solitudes, the

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buttero, the shepherd and his dogs, the charcoal-burner by his *carbonara*, the life of the farm and the wood, all this seen, not through the spectacles of mediocre romanticism and of classic artificiality, but in its rugged, wild simplicity, attracted him. He was an excellent shot, moreover, and, ranging the country with his gun as well as his artist's paraphernalia, he became penetrated with the spirit of the soil. His work, of which but few specimens remain to us, for he was singularly careless and irreverential towards his own artistic productions, and moreover, his canvases are scattered about in private collections in England and elsewhere, show powerful draughtsmanship and minute observation. In his double character of sportsman and artist, animal life interested him profoundly, and he was more especially an animal painter. Amongst the most notable works which he has left behind him is a series of etchings, still on sale in Rome at the librarian, Spithoever's, in Piazza di Spagna, treating scenes in the Campagna, studies of buffaloes, herds of horses, the patient ox ploughing the soil or idly grazing, flocks of sheep, savage sheep-dogs; and in these he has rendered with great force and individuality, and with great simplicity of means, the life and character of the scenery he loved so well. His drawings of animals are scientific in their accuracy, his landscapes structural; one feels that he knew the very conformation of the soil; no attempt at facile prettiness is here, but a deep feeling of the sentiment of the scenery. His colour has evidently been influenced by the Italian masters, and has a warmth and mellownesss alien to the prevalent rawness of the English painters of his day.

It is somewhat strange that so original and powerful

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an artistic temperament, and one which exercised so deep an influence on those with whom it came into contact, should be so generally ignored in England and elsewhere. The fact is that Coleman was an *originale*, somewhat rugged in character like the scenery which he interpreted. A picture of his was once refused at the Academy, and after that he no longer sought to exhibit in England; in Rome a landscape of his was skied at the annual exhibition held by the *Amatori e Cultori*, and that was the first and last canvas he sent there. Known and appreciated by the few then capable of understanding his sincere and original work, he neither courted nor desired popularity. He made of Rome his home, married a Roman lady, and his children, among whom Enrico Coleman is the worthy and genial inheritor of his father's artistic gifts, are Italians. To us it is especially interesting to note that it was an English artist who was to show Costa the path which he was destined to follow with such fortunate results for modern Italian art. And more especially interesting is this as emphasising an observation made by Costa himself, who used to remark that landscape is an essentially English art, and has always been imported into Italy.

Naturally so many artists of diverse schools, nationalities, and temperaments, could not meet without their intercourse giving rise to interminable discussions. The variety of views, feeling, and research represented in the mixed assembly which congregated every spring and summer at the Pension Martorelli led Costa, to use his own words, to the conclusion that sentiment (*il sentimento*) must always be the first, the all-pervading, and the ultimate object of the artist; that the only worthy form of art is that inspired

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PLATE VII

STUDY FOR "AD FONTEM ARICINUM"

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by direct love of truth, and that the true artist must begin from the beginning, studying and working with love, with patience, and with liberty.

These ideas were the constant, unswerving principles which guided the artistic life of Giovanni Costa. *Love and Liberty* were his watchwords. We find this idea constantly guiding his brush. He loves nature passionately, and he brings to bear in his representations of her all the patient industry of the lover. His life's work bears witness to this. The delicate, patient, study of line, of colour values, of light and shade, which gives such a peculiar charm to his landscapes; the scrupulous fidelity to nature revealed by the very titles of his pictures, which tell us the hour, the atmospheric conditions under which the work was accomplished, the freedom from conventional choice or treatment of his subjects, all testifies to his fidelity to these principles. It is this same idea which inspires the spirit of his art criticism, of which we shall have to speak later on. For in writing of the work of a young artist, Tani, we find him using the following words: "Love alone does not suffice for creation; Love is the essence of life, but singly and unaided he cannot generate. Let us give him a spouse, so that they may have a daughter, Art. For pity's sake do not let us mate him with Licence, nor yet with Timidity; let us unite Love and Liberty."

At the same time he was always keenly alive to the importance of technique; the composition of a picture is a question of sentiment; but sentiment aided by good technique is doubly powerful; and thus in all his work, both in the studies (sketches is a word one cannot accurately apply to Costa's work) from nature and in his

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finished pictures, we find poetic feeling and comprehension of the essential characteristics of his subject, allied to minute and accurate study and great delicacy of finish.

It is interesting to note that while the young Roman painter was working out for himself this artistic programme, quietly and patiently tracing a new path in the midst of the general decadence of the fine arts, and in an environment singularly unpropitious—ruined by the shoppy art executed to supply tasteless foreigners with views of the Colosseum, and stereotyped peasants—mere lay figures on whom to hang more or less gaudy costumes —with, as yet, no promising soil amongst his compatriots in which to sow the truth which he perceived; in England a group of young artists, barely out of the student stage, had boldly broken with tradition. One of their captains was a young man, barely twenty years of age, an Italian by parentage, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and they had raised a tempest of academic wrath and Philistine denunciation by exhibiting the first pre-Raphaelite pictures: in 1849 the mutterings of a tempest, and in 1850 its noisy outburst. Not till several years later was Nino Costa to get in touch with the English innovators of that period. Working on different lines, in different countries, and under diverse conditions, they had none the less arrived at the same conclusions, *i.e.* that truth, not tradition, nature, and not the art of a past age, must be the guide and lodestar of the artist. This coincidence affords but another among the many examples which prove that when the propitious moment has arrived, new ideas, towards which the past has been silently, often unconsciously, working, reveal themselves spontaneously, simultaneously, in widely separated lands, amongst people who have had

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no previous intercourse. After all, such movements are but the inevitable result of all that has preceded them. Revolutions, in art as in politics, are but the sudden revelation of a slow and silent evolution; and thus, at this period, we have the pre-Raphaelites in England, Corot, Millet, and the *plein air* Barbizon school in France, and Giovanni Costa in Italy, all proclaiming in different accents, and independently of one another, the same artistic truth.

As we have referred to the essential similarity between the art of Costa and that of the pre-Raphaelites, it may not be uninteresting to note here the chief divergencies between the spirit of these two. It seems to me that the crux of the matter lies in the fact that Costa belongs to the Latin, his English contemporaries to the Germanic civilisation. In the Italian, we find all that innate Latin sense of measure, of proportion, of plastic beauty, in one word—of *art*, which excludes the crudities and exaggerations of Anglo-Saxon production. An instinctive feeling for form, a just sense of proportion and relative values, the rejection of that originality which borders on eccentricity, a love of lucidity and good workmanship, characterises all classic art; and if Costa is not academic, his art is essentially classic, classic in its feeling of repose, of line, and, I repeat, above all, of proportion. His landscapes breathe the spirit of Virgil and Theocritus, read by him as a boy amidst the beautiful scenery of Montefiascone. The turbulent fertility of Gothic art, the chaotic greatness of a Blake or a Carlyle, are quite alien from the Latin genius; men of the former order can, perhaps, boast the greater intuitive genius; the latter are, undoubtedly, the more perfect artists.

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Inspired by the ideas which I have tried to express above, Costa set to work in hard earnest; studying actively from nature, passing weeks and months in the solitudes of the Campagna, camping out in the woods of Ariccia and the Fajola, never missing a dawn or a sunset, choosing by preference those hours when the light is mildest, just before sunrise, and immediately after the sun has gone down.

Quite one of the first pictures of this period is that study of a wood of hazel trees which I have already mentioned, and which was begun as far back as 1847, and worked on at intervals during six years, as only for a little more than a fortnight in the twelvemonth were the light and colouring what the artist aimed at. This picture, which has remained in Costa's studio, is of extreme delicacy of finish, reminding one in this respect of its pre-Raphaelite contemporaries, though painted with a broader feeling for values. Though belonging to such an early period of his artistic career, it still remains a very characteristic work of his first style before he had come under the influence of Tuscan scenery, and is full of the feeling of the mystery and poetry of the wood, to which the small group of girls seen in the middle distance adds just a touch of human interest.

During the ten years which he passed thus in the Campagna, between the Alban hills, the Sabine range, and the sea, he worked contemporaneously on several pictures, taking up each in turn as the hour and season of the year which he wished to interpret came round.

The two great, and we may say without exaggeration, especially in the case of the latter, historic pictures of this period, are the large canvases entitled "Ad Fontem

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PLATE VIII

"AD FONTEM ARICINUM"

In the possession of the Costa family

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Ariccinam," and "Women loading Wood on Boats at Porto d'Anzio."

The first of these works was inspired by seeing a ray of golden sunlight strike through the leafy depths of the wood at Ariccia during a rain shower, and represents a scene of love and jealousy at the fountain. The first small study for this picture will always count amongst our artist's best work, and is quite Titianesque in its wonderful dark and rich colour effect. The scene is laid at the fountain in the midst of the wood round which, at sunset, the women in their beautiful and picturesque costumes, now, alas, fast disappearing before the inroads of modern civilisation, gather to fill their large copper vessels with water. A stormy autumnal sunset illumines the somewhat sombre landscape; the sere and yellow leaves are falling from the trees; some of the women have opened their archaic-shaped umbrellas to protect them from the heavy slanting raindrops. One has filled her pitcher and is leaving, carrying it on her head, proceeding with the slow and regal carriage which distinguishes the population of Latium. To the left of the picture we see a girl and her lover, absorbed in each other's company, as is lovers' wont. In the centre of the canvas a group of women are walking side by side, loaded with their pitchers; one of them, a dark beauty, advances with somewhat defiant bearing; her companions glance from her to the pair of lovers; she represents the note of tragedy, the betrayed woman. Behind this group a mother joyfully dances her baby, to whom she has just given the breast. In the background other figures are grouped; one kneels at the well, filling her jar with water. The whole effect produced is one of sultry passion, illuminated by the threatening light of

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the stormy sunset, whose red rays burst through the ominous clouds. The treatment is that of a transitional period, the detail is studied with great accuracy, the composition and grouping are somewhat academic, and at the same time there is a research of simplicity in the figures, almost an attempt at archaism, as if, in the words of an Italian critic, the artist had had in his mind's eye the strong outline of some classic bas-relief or Etruscan vase. A whole series of drawings which still exist show how carefully Costa worked at this picture. Each of the figures was first studied from the nude, and we reproduce drawings of heads and details of foliage made for this work.

The second picture may be considered as the crowning product of this, Costa's first artistic period. The "Women loading Wood at Porto d'Anzio" is an offspring of the romantic school, and at the same time a revolt against the defects of that school. It is sober in colour and composition, yet rich in harmony, and almost sculptural in line. The first sunset flush colours the breezy, cloudy sky; against the horizon stands out the blue outline of the Island of Circe of classic fame; the greyish blue sea is instinct with movement and transparency. Across the broken, sandy foreground, on which lies bleaching the skull of a buffalo, easily recognisable by the shape of its horns, advances a group of peasant women laden with faggots gathered in the neighbouring woods, which they are about to load on the flat-bottomed boats lying at anchor in the water before them, Their step is elastic, their carriage upright, as they mount the little hillock which divides them from the water's edge. A young man, who accompanies them, looks up with passionate

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eyes at one of these handsome, silent women, one of whom sits down a moment to extract a thorn from her foot. In this picture Costa revealed himself an artist in the fullest sense of the word, gifted with the poetic feeling and intuition which enabled him to seize the true character of the landscape and people he painted, and armed with the technical knowledge and sure draughtsmanship necessary for a successful rendering of his mental vision. Begun towards 1852, the "Women at Porto d'Anzio" was exhibited at Rome at the annual show held by the *Società Promotrice degli Amatori e Cultori* in 1856. It attracted much attention, and was favourably noticed by the critic of the Parisian *Débats*, besides being much appreciated by many of his fellow-artists. It was, however, too different from the popular style of painting of the Neapolitan school then in vogue to be understood by the general public.

To this period, too, belong the following works, in all of which he strives to give the character of the scene, studying carefully the light, the relative values, the atmospheric conditions: A sea study, the first he ever painted, executed in 1852, which Corot greatly admired, and which now belongs to his family. "A Day of Scirocco Weather on the Roman Coast," a large and most important canvas, in which we see a fisherman, half nude, hurrying along the desolate and sultry seashore, near Ostia, anxious to get the fish he is carrying in a basket to its destination before the hot wind shall have tainted it. The stunted trees, the narrow line of blue sea crested with foam, the figure struggling along the sandy foreground, all is eloquent of the hot, exhausted, dusty atmosphere so characteristic of scirocco weather in Italy. This picture, begun in 1852, now belongs to the Rev. Stopford Brooke. "Ten Minutes after

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Sunset in the Alban Hills," a study of sere oak-foliage, green ferns, and red soil, begun in 1854, is still in the artist's studio. "Cœli enarrant gloriam Dei," a glorious sky piece, in which the artist has depicted one of those vast horizons peculiar to the scenery of Latium, swept with silver clouds on a blue sky, which in their bold outlines and large proportions assume a monumental character. The distant range of mountains melts into the sweeping line of marsh, whilst a peasant woman stepping out into the swampy waste holds her baby son, whom she carries in a basket, high above her head as if in triumph. This fine work now belongs to Mr. Freshfield.

"Music in the Wood," which we reproduce, is another highly finished little picture, poetic in feeling and rich in colour, belonging to these years. The figure of the girl, nestling at the root of the tree, fondling a lamb whilst listening to the rustic music played by the stalwart peasant hidden from her by the foliage, is full of sweetness. This picture belongs to the artist's family.

Another extremely delicate and finished work of these years is a quite small picture of the woods of the Fajola. Forest and underwood, in all their wealth of summer opulence, are rendered with loving accuracy and sentiment; in the distance we see the characteristic outline of Monte Cavo. This picture is quite Venetian in the richness and harmony of the colour scheme, and possesses in a high degree the great charm of first-rate landscape, a sense of atmosphere.

Not only did Costa study nature, but also man in his relation to nature. All the humble and useful works of the country were treated by him with sympathetic touch and intimate knowledge, and in this he reminds us somewhat of

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Millet, with this difference, that with the French artist the human interest is supreme, with the Italian, man is always subordinate to nature, a quite new feature for Italian art.

Amongst works of this class belonging to these years, we must mention "The Charcoal-Burner in the Woods of the Fajola stoking the *Carbonara*." This panel represents a wintry scene, illuminated by a stormy sunset casting a threatening red and orange glow. The dark figure of the charcoal-burner stands out boldly against the luminous background of the *carbonara*, in which he is making the draught-holes with the help of a long pole. The foreground is strewn with dead leaves; the gnarled trunks of trees, destined to be burnt for charcoal, lie hard by; a distant strip of sea closes the horizon. In another study, treating of the life of the charcoal-burners, who abound in the uncultivated country round Rome, we see them and their women dancing, as is their wont, on the level patch of ground left by the extinct *carbonara* (we reproduce a study for one of the dancing figures); and in yet another we see these same dusky toilers loading a boat with charcoal at Porto d'Anzio. A very beautiful study belonging to these years is one of "Women steeping Flax in the Stream of Ariccina." The figures of the women, their skirts tucked up above their knees, standing in the water or leaning over the banks, one throwing her head back to drink water from a gourd, are drawn with mastery, all carefully studied from life; the sky is swept by rapid clouds, and the colour scheme, in which predominate red, green, and yellow, is rich and warm. This beautiful little work, which the artist never developed into a large picture, was executed under difficulties, as the women greatly objected to being watched as they stood with bare legs in the shallow stream. Another interesting

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study of these years, and one which the artist never developed into a picture as he had intended, shows women drawing water at the fountain in the Piazza at Ariccia. This study, which has remained in his studio, is most carefully designed and drawn, and comparing it with the work of his mature period we notice how progressive Costa was in his art. There is the art evolution of half a century between this study and the work of his later years.

All the studies from nature of these years, and they are most numerous, for Costa's industry was unceasing, are minute and delicate in finish to a degree, whilst preserving all the freshness and spontaneity which characterise work done direct from nature, and are often amongst his best things, instinct with that charm which sometimes the laboured and elaborate effort of the finished pictures tends to stifle.

It would be out of place here to attempt to give a list of all the studies and pictures of this period; catalogues are not interesting reading, and I shall limit myself to the most important works. Amongst these must be counted two which resulted from studies made during a twenty days' sketching expedition which Costa made along with George Mason in 1853. The two friends went together to the seashore near Ardea, a famous seaport of antiquity, mentioned by Virgil, now a mere hamlet. They spent their whole time out of doors, painting as long as daylight lasted, and passing the nights *à la belle etoile*. Mason was engaged on studies for what was to be one of his very fine pictures. Costa was studying for one of his most characteristic works, "Women stealing Wood on the Shore near Ardea on an Evening when the Libeccio blows." The women are hastily gathering the faggots;

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PLATE IX

"WOMEN LOADING WOOD ON BOATS AT PORTO D'ANZIO"

In the possession of Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Rome

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some of them have already collected their meagre booty, and are anxiously making off with it. The strong sea-wind blows their skirts and the bare branches of the weather-beaten trees; the shades of evening gather. The subject is treated with great simplicity and forcefulness, and must be counted among the artist's most typical works, both for choice of subject and execution. The picture resulting from these studies, and painted many years afterwards, was purchased by Mrs. Percy Wyndham, and is now in the important collection possessed by Lord Carlisle. It was during this expedition, one stormy autumnal night, whilst our two artists were camping out as best they might, that chance provided them with a better resting-place than that afforded by the inhospitable sea-shore. A Neapolitan fishing-smack, driven out of its course by the tempestuous weather, sought to take refuge on shore. Costa and Mason, aroused from sleep by the cries of the distressed mariners, went to their aid, and lent a hand at tugging the rope which had been thrown to shore. The night, however, was so dark that the sailors could not see the two who had come to their assistance, and who were aiding in dragging the ship to shore. The result of the extra effort was a sudden lurch forward made by the boat, which threw all the men in a heap on to the land. The crew and the artists came, of course, to be on the best of terms, and the advent of the boat was a real godsend now that rough weather had set in, as at night they were able to sleep in it, dry and warm. Costa availed himself of this event to paint another quite small picture, for which the boat and the fishermen served him as models, which he entitled, "They Sleep by Day to Work by Night," and which shows us the men lying in their boat at the hour of sunset. The

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finished picture resulting from this study was to be the first work Costa sold, and its purchaser was none other than Mr. Frederick (afterwards Lord) Leighton. It was also the first work which he exhibited in England, where it was hung in the Academy of 1857. From that date forward Costa was always a regular exhibitor in England, for many years showing his works at Burlington House, afterwards at the Grosvenor Gallery, and of late years at the New Gallery.

These sketching expeditions were frequently undertaken by the two artists during the four years from 1852 to 1856, the date when Mason returned to England to marry and settle down in his native land. At one time they spent several months together at the farm of the Tittoni family, well known for the part they took in the patriotic movement of the period, and one of whom Mason painted on horseback, with a view of the Campagna for background. It was during these years, too, that Costa became acquainted through Mason with Mr. William Cartwright, a lover of the fine arts, who was of great assistance to the young English artist during those early years of impecuniosity, and who was also to become a purchaser of different works by Costa himself, as well as a close personal friend.

The year 1853 is memorable in Costa's life for the formation of a friendship which death alone was to interrupt—the lifelong friendship with Frederick Leighton. The circumstances under which the two great artists first met are so characteristic that I cannot do better than quote the account given by Costa himself, and published in a charming paper which he contributed to the *Cornhill Magazine* in March 1897 about his brother painter :—

"At the Caffè Greco there was a certain waiter,

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Rafaello, a favourite with all, who had collected an album of water-colour sketches by distinguished artists, such as Cornelius, Overbeck, Français, Benouville, Brouloff, Boecklin, &c., and I felt much flattered when I too was asked to contribute, with the result that I gave him the only water-colour I have ever done in my life. Leighton also was begged by Rafaello to do something for the album, and having it in his hands he saw my work, and asked whose it was. On being told, he advised Rafaello to keep it safely, saying that one day it would be very valuable. When I came later to the Caffè, Rafaello told me how a most distinguished young Englishman, who spoke every language, had seen my water-colour, and all he had said about it. I was very proud of his criticism, and it gave me courage for the rest of my life.

"That same year, in the month of May, the usual artists' picnic took place at Cervara, a farm in the Roman Campagna. There used to be donkey races, and the winner of these was always the hero of the day. We had halted at Tor de' Schiavi, three miles out of Rome, and half the distance to Cervara, for breakfast. Every one had dismounted and tied his beast to a paling, and all were eating merrily.

"Suddenly one of the donkeys kicked over a beehive, and out flew the bees to revenge themselves on the donkeys. There were about a hundred of the poor beasts, but they all unloosed themselves and took to flight, kicking up their heels in the air—all except one little donkey who was unable to free himself, and so the swarm fell upon him.

"The picnic party also broke up and fled, with the exception of one young man with fair, curly hair, dressed in velvet, who, slipping on gloves and tying a handkerchief

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over his face, ran to liberate the poor little beast. I had started to do the same, but less resolutely, having no gloves; so I met him as he came back, and congratulated him, asking him his name.

"And in this way I first made the acquaintance of Frederick Leighton, who was then about twenty-three years old; but I was not then aware that he was the unknown admirer of my drawing in Rafaello's album. I remember that day I had the great honour of winning the donkey race, and Leighton won the tilting at a ring with a flexible cane; therefore we met again when sharing the honour of drinking the wine from the President's cup, and again we shook hands. When I heard from Count Gamba, who was a friend and fellow-student of Leighton's, what a great talent he had, I tried to see his work and to improve our acquaintance; for I felt that I must be somewhat of a donkey myself, because of the Franciscan education I had received, and because I was the fourteenth in our family, and I thought the companionship of this spirited youth would give me courage."

The acquaintance thus made was followed up by a visit which Costa paid to Leighton's studio in the Via della Purificazione, where the young artist was then engaged on his first great picture, "The Procession of Cimabue," which, bought from the Academy by Queen Victoria, was so soon to bring the painter into the first ranks of contemporary artists. It was at this period, too, that Leighton first became acquainted with George Mason, whom a few years later on he was to assist so powerfully, creating for him a position in the artistic world of London, and, more necessary still to the struggling artist, a *clientèle* in England.

Thus these three were brought together amidst the

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wondrous Italian scenery. United by the strong bonds of a common nobility of character, and by high artistic aims and ideals, they were destined to remain close friends whilst life lasted, ever ready to lend a helping hand or do a kind turn the one to the other. Costa was to be the last survivor of the trio, having outlived Mason by thirty years, and Leighton by nearly six, but to the very last, spite of his own broken health and constant sufferings, his large vivacious eyes would brighten, and his voice vibrate with feeling in recalling the memory and the great work of his two dear comrades.

To this year (1853) belongs also the foundation of another firm and influential friendship in the life of Costa, that with Mr. and Mrs. Sartoris (Miss Adelaide Kemble), who were also great friends of Leighton. In Costa's own words, Mr. Sartoris was one of the first art critics of his day, and Mrs. Sartoris had the mind of a great artist and a most serene and elevated nature, being one of those rare women destined to exercise a great and ennobling influence on all who came within her sphere.

As I have already said, and as the above anecdote shows, Costa was in the habit, during these years, of coming into the city whenever business or pleasure prompted him so to do, and it was on one of these visits, in 1854, that he was stricken down by the first of the several great illnesses, which in spite of his iron constitution and usually robust health, assailed him at intervals during his career. On this occasion the disease was a very severe attack of congestion of the lungs, perhaps not much to be wondered at if the sketching experiences, like those I have related at Ardea in 1852, were often repeated. On this occasion his life was quite despaired of, and, yielding to the entreaties

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of his mother, who was still alive at this date, he consented to be confessed and to receive Extreme Unction. At that date, and indeed to-day too for the matter of that, the idea of dying unshriven was terrible in the extreme to the devout Italian, and the son, though himself no believer in the mediating offices of the priest between God and His creatures, was anxious to spare his mother this dire grief. To the confessor, called to his bedside, he began by saying, "We are both philosophers, and I have no doubt that neither of us wishes to tease the other," and after this declaration all was soon arranged to their mutual satisfaction.

It is interesting to know that during this dangerous illness Costa was treated exclusively by a homœopathic physician, Dot. Ladelci. He was a friend of the painter's and a man in whom he had much confidence, and Costa would have no other medical assistance, though in those days in Rome homœopathy was looked upon as a "fad," only fit for the treatment of imaginary ailments, and he was the first person in the city who had ever dreamed of calling in a homœopathic doctor to prescribe for a serious illness. This little matter aroused much interest at the time; the city was more provincial than it is to-day, and the Costa family one of the best known amongst all classes of society; the result was that all the princely families in the Papal capital were sending daily to inquire if the eccentric painter, already known to be a hot-headed and injudicious person to say the least, owing to his share in the Roman Revolution, was not dead. Pius IX. himself was much interested in the progress of the unorthodox patient, and when applied to by the patient's family for the grace of an absolution *in articulo mortis*, he is reported to have said, "As the crazy fellow has put himself in the hands

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of a homœopathist, let us send it him" ("Da che quel matto si fa curare da un omeopatico mandiamogli l'assoluzione"). Costa recovered, thanks to the physician's skill or to his own robust constitution, and Dr. Ladelci's reputation was made. From that day he became one of the fashionable medical men of the city; he was summoned to attend the Pope himself, and as Costa phrased it, "He set up a carriage on the strength of my illness."

These ten years of work, which led Costa from youth to the prime of manhood, were, as we have seen, decisive in forming his artistic character and personality. At the close of this, his first productive period, he had completed a numerous and important series of works. In the midst of the general decadence of arts in the Peninsula, when a Ciseri and a Servolini were looked up to as the highest expressions of Italian art, the continuers of the traditions of Michelangelo and Raphael, and when the bulk of pictorial production was reduced to the most hopeless level of commercial vulgarity, he could already boast such an important picture as the "Women at Porto d'Anzio," and he had acquired the knowledge and the authority necessary to become a teacher, and the initiator of a new artistic revival. Amongst the cosmopolitan group of artists who in those days made Rome their headquarters, his genius and exceptional qualities were already fully recognised, and he had formed several of the great friendships of his life. Lenbach, Boecklin, Français, Emile David, Corot, besides Mason and Leighton, were already of the number of his friends. His artistic vision constantly widened, he came under the charm of Tuscan scenery, more delicate, more refined in its beauty than the vaster horizons of his native Latium, with their rolling, swelling

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lines and rich colouring; he visited England and felt all the sweet, homely beauty of its moist green country; his knowledge of men and schools and technique grew; but henceforth in his art he was always Costa, his work was always distinguished by the poetic feeling, the delicate sense of values, and the almost sculpturesque treatment of line which, at the date we have reached, were already his.

The year 1859 was to witness a fresh crisis in the history of Italy. The seed sown so generously in 1848 was to bear fruit, and on the 29th of April of that year the declaration of war, proclaimed against the Austrian Emperor Francis Joseph by the allied forces of Piedmont and France, once more summoned patriots from all parts of the Peninsula to take up arms on behalf of their native land, and, for the second time in his life, Costa became a soldier.

To some who consider that the artist should live a life apart from the turmoil and trouble of the work-a-day world, the constant interruption of Costa's artistic career by the counter-claims of politics may seem regrettable. Such persons should, however, remember that in those days politics did not spell the sordid tale of personal ambition and noxious party intrigue which that word too often implies to-day. The epoch was heroic, and Italy had produced a race of men worthy of the great period they were living through. Costa, as he frequently told me, always detested the life of the soldier; diplomatic double-dealing and political ambition were alike alien to his soul; but he believed and always acted on the idea that the artist must live in his age and do his duty by his country, even more fully than is required of the ordinary mortal. To whom much is given, from him is much expected; and in this spirit he again took his part in the national struggle.

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PLATE X

"COELI ENARRANT GLORIAM DEI"

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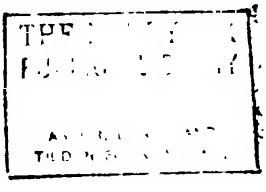

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CHAPTER V

THE CAMPAIGN OF 1859—ARRIVAL IN FLORENCE

THE return of Costa to active participation in the political struggles of the day, makes it necessary for us once again to glance briefly at the state of the country.

The defeats of 1848-49 had been followed by a period of outward quiet beneath which the patriotic yeast was fermenting; whilst the lessons taught by past failure were being carefully studied by all patriots. Many had begun to think that popular revolts and individual effort, however fruitful they might prove in deeds of heroism, could not win the day against such a powerful political and military organisation as that of the Austrian Empire which then held the hegemony of Europe. Those whom bitter experience inclined to such a view naturally looked around in search of the nucleus of military and political power wherewith to oppose the national enemy, and their eyes were turned towards Piedmont.

Victor Emanuel II., who succeeded to the Sardinian throne on the abdication of Charles Albert the evening after the disastrous defeat of Novara, had given proof, under the most trying circumstances, of his strength of character and determination to stand true to the Liberal principles which had found such a wavering champion in his unfortunate father; and during the years immediately succeeding his accession to the throne, aided by such men as Cavour and Minghetti, he worked steadily and

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unostentatiously to get the finances of the army and of his small state into a fit condition to be able once more to defy with a chance of success the formidable power of Austria; and not unnaturally many Italians began to look towards Turin as to the city whence the watchword of the future liberation might best proceed. But the event which did most to persuade many serious and sincere patriots that salvation could not be expected to result from isolated conspiracies, was the ill-fated insurrection which broke out in Milan in 1853. This movement had been organised under the direction of Mazzini, who wrote the manifesto for the occasion, and it was hoped that a band of patriots would be able to attack and disarm the garrison of 12,000 men, and the guard stationed at the palace. This was to be the signal for a general uprising, and for the arrival of armed bands who, from various points of the surrounding country, were to pour into the Lombard capital at the first signal of revolt. As might easily have been foreseen, this was a hopeless undertaking, and ended in an abortive attempt, followed by several executions and by the flight to Piedmont of all the revolutionists who were able to escape; and coming as it did during a moment of enforced repose and reflection, its influence was decisive in turning the eyes of an ever-growing section of the revolutionary party towards the little state which seemed to offer hopes of further developments in the future.

Though Costa, during the years which we have considered in the preceding chapter, dedicated himself principally to his art, his interest in the destinies of his country had in nowise abated; and the trend of events, accentuated by the disasters in Milan to which we have

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just referred, convinced him that if unity and freedom were to be won, the help of Piedmont must not be despised. The patriotic party in Rome was greatly disorganised after the defeat of 1849. The largest section was still, nominally at least, faithful to Mazzini's intransigeant Republican ideas; ideas of which, till then, Costa had been an ardent upholder. In politics, however, as indeed in art, he was never a sectarian, desiring, above all other considerations, in the latter truth, in the former the liberation and independence of his country, and for this object he was willing to adopt whatever means seemed most propitious.

It was in his studio in the Via Margutta that a group of patriots met in the summer of 1853 to see by what means they could best forward a united action between the Roman revolutionists and the Liberal Government at Turin; a policy, the wisdom of which was later on perceived by Garibaldi and by Mazzini himself. The little band of conspirators which thus met to bring about an alliance which was to be so fruitful of results, was composed of Luigi Mastricola, Luigi Venanzi, Luigi Silvestrelli, Augusto Lorenzini, and Giovanni Costa, all patriots who had given proof of their devotion to their principles during the Republic of 1849. By them it was decided that the presence of Giuseppe Checchetelli, an illustrious Roman patriot who had fought in the campaign of 1848, and taken a prominent part in the revolution of 1849, would be most useful at this juncture. Checchetelli, who on the restoration of the Papal Government had retired to Ciciliano, near Tivoli, to escape persecution, was at this period a most ardent Mazzinian, but it was thought that if matters were clearly set before him he too might come to see the advisability of co-operation

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with Piedmont, and, in that case, his influence with the partisans of revolution in Rome was such that they were likely to adopt the tactics he should advise. The delicate mission of going to Ciciliano and persuading Checchetelli of the desirability of the new policy they proposed, was entrusted by his fellow-conspirators to Costa. When our artist first broached the object of his mission he found Checchetelli still firmly convinced of the truth of his intransigeant ideas, and most unwilling to listen to any proposal which would commit the revolutionary party to accept the policy pursued by Piedmont. "You will see, this idea will be the ruin of everything," he said to Costa, who tried to persuade him that the course of events made it absolutely necessary to modify their policy. "Come to Rome, and see for yourself how matters stand," was his only reply.

Checchetelli consented to this request, and not only did the state of affairs which he found in the Papal city cause him to come over to Costa's views, but he went even further than our artist in his support of this policy, and became henceforth one of the most strenuous champions of the idea of co-operation with Victor Emanuel and the Piedmontese Liberals. Shortly after his arrival in Rome he was elected president of the National Roman Committee, constituted with the object of furthering to the best of its powers the union of Rome, as capital, with the rest of Italy. Later on Checchetelli was again forced to flee from Rome, and he took refuge first in Florence. Afterwards he became deputy for Tolentino to the national parliament sitting at Turin, and during all these years, as we shall have occasion to see later on, he took an active part in directing the Roman conspiracies.

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Meanwhile the sagacious diplomacy of Cavour, and his prudent internal policy, had transformed the Kingdom of Sardinia, which, on the accession of Victor Emanuel II., after the defeat of Novara, was both disorganised and bankrupt, into a power on the political chess-board of Europe. Napoleon III., though determined at all costs to support the pretensions of the Pope in order not to alienate the French clerical vote on which his power largely depended, was at the same time reasoned by Cavour, and frightened by Orsini, into a resolution to take up arms on behalf of Italy, in exchange, we must not forget, for the very substantial reward of the provinces of Nice and Savoy. A victorious campaign was very necessary to maintain his military prestige, and by taking up the cause of Italian independence, the Man of December hoped to conciliate the sympathies of the Parisian liberals. The result of all these many causes, which had been at work for three or four years, was the meeting at Plombières, in July 1858, when the fate of Italy and the terms of the agreement were settled between the French Emperor and Cavour. And though Louis Napoleon persisted to the very last in his characteristic policy of vacillation and underhand double-dealing, the Gordian knot was at last cut, on the 23rd of April, by the Austrian ultimatum to the Sardinian King, and, on the 27th, Victor Emanuel proclaimed war and entered the field with his French allies.

What we have said as to the direction of Costa's political ideas during these ten years of truce makes it quite natural that, as soon as war was declared, he should have hastened to enrol himself in the Piedmontese army, joining as a private the regiment known as the Aosta Light Cavalry. His reason for joining the regular army rather

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than the volunteer force in which he would have found himself once more under the command of Garibaldi, was alarm at the reports circulated as to the lack of discipline prevailing in the ranks of the volunteers. This was a decision which he was not slow to repent of, when he discovered that the discipline which he had sought for deprived his regiment of the honour of fighting for their country on the battlefield, the whole of its time being taken up in a series of wearisome, if necessary, marches and counter-marches. However, Costa was not a man to grumble at the conditions which he had voluntarily imposed upon himself; on the contrary, he was scrupulous in the performance of his duties, and we may be sure that his youthful enthusiasm and keen sense of humour permitted him to see the best, even if it did not blind him to the worst side of the situation.

The Aosta Cavalleggieri was one of the crack regiments of the Piedmontese army, and counted in its ranks representatives of many of the noblest families in Italy; and Costa was not slow to perceive that the narrow-minded military caste which characterised the Piedmontese army, looked with anything but a favourable eye on the volunteers, whom love of country led to join their ranks.

As Costa had passed the regulation maximum age for enlisting, he had to provide himself with his own horse, and he always preserved an affectionate remembrance of the magnificent beast which he acquired on this occasion, a splendid, big animal, fully thirty years old, known by the name of the *Nonno*, "the Grandfather," which he purchased from the lieutenant of his regiment, in the hope that this might be an inducement to allow him to march at once. This intelligent steed knew all the different military

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signals and manœuvres, and, thanks to the *Nonno*, Costa was always at the head of his company. But spite of all his efforts to be on good terms with his comrades, he could not mistake the evident ill-will which the regular soldiers, especially the non-commissioned officers, possessed with all the prejudices of the professional military man, displayed towards the volunteers in their ranks.

Perhaps the following anecdote, related to me by Costa with the keen sense of humour and twinkling fun in his eyes which gave such point and relish to any tale he told, may not be unwelcome to the reader as casting a side-light on this aspect of his military experiences. The volunteers, then, were looked at askance by the strait-laced, narrow-minded Piedmontese officers, both high and low, and on them all the hardest tasks and drudgery of the regiment devolved. One day his corporal ordered Costa to take a grain sack and follow him. They were to go a distance of three miles, and fill the sack with oats for the horses, and return therewith to camp under the burning midday sun of a hot July day. Costa, of course, did as he was bid, but unfortunately the sack he had provided himself with was full of holes, a fact which he notified to the corporal, who merely told him to stuff the bottom with straw. This arrangement compelled Costa to carry the sack upright on his shoulder instead of slinging it across his back, a circumstance which made the task much more fatiguing, and thus he toiled along under the fierce sunshine, perspiring freely, and breathing heavily like a grampus, whilst the corporal, following on behind, kept on shouting out at him in Piedmontese dialect, "*Cammina, toch de plandron! Manica de ramass!*" "Hurry up, lazy bones! Broomstick!" And Costa, always ready with

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a witty answer, retorted, "I must thank you for your zeal, corporal, for I joined this regiment because I admired its discipline; but, unfortunately, I am not accustomed to this kind of work, and must beg you to be patient," an answer to which the corporal replied by confining him to barracks. So that evening, whilst undergoing the disciplinary measure, he invited the corporal to drink a glass with him, in recognition of his strict enforcement of discipline; and he plied him so well with good wine that the poor corporal got quite drunk, and was unable to answer the roll-call next morning—so he and Costa were quits. This corporal was a first-rate horseman and a connoisseur in horse-flesh, and was held in much esteem by the officers, and as he and Nino after this little passage-at-arms were on the best of terms (due largely to several handsome presents which the young Roman made him), Costa was able, thanks to this man's good offices, to do pretty much as he liked during the rest of the time that he passed in the regiment. As stated already, the Aosta Cavalleggieri took no part in the actual fighting, and most of the time which they did not spend in strategical marches and counter-marches they spent quartered in the vicinity of Turin, whither Costa used to make frequent excursions, thus creating a diversion to the monotony of camp life. But the clean, orderly, regularly-planned city, so dear to the heart of the good *Travet*, did not appeal to the artist accustomed to the picturesque grandeur of Rome before the latter-day town-councils, with their *piano regolatore*,[1] had reduced it, as far as possible, to a third-rate imitation of Paris or New York, and Turin was never with him a favourite city.

[1] Thus is called the programme for municipal improvements and alterations which the Town Council is now carrying out.

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By the end of June the Treaty of Villafranca brought the war abruptly to an end. Louis Napoleon, unwilling to belie his reputation for falsehood, decided not to maintain his pledge to free Italy "from the Alps to the Adriatic," and unexpectedly withdrew, leaving the task more than half unfulfilled, whilst claiming the full price of the cession of Nice and Savoy. This was indeed a cruel blow to the hopes of the Italians, but it only served to strengthen their determination to complete by their own unaided efforts their independence; whilst the French Emperor and troops, who but a few months before had been received with wild enthusiasm, left the country amidst general demonstrations of hostility. Costa was no better satisfied than the majority of his countrymen with the terms of peace; still there was nothing to be done, and, free from his patriotic duties, his thoughts once more turned to his art.

He immediately left Pinerolo, near Turin, where he had been stationed with his regiment, with the intention of returning to Rome by Milan and Florence. He spent a few days in the Lombard capital, where he was able to admire for the first time the masterpiece of Leonardo da Vinci and the treasures of the Brera, where the splendid collection of Luini's works revealed to him a new world of artistic beauty, and thence he proceeded to Florence, where he had planned to stay a week. But "Man proposes and God disposes," says the proverb; and Costa's week was destined to be prolonged into ten years of almost continual residence. We may note by the way one small but immediate outcome of this change in his plans. So great was the enthusiasm which Florence aroused in him, that it made him oblivious

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for the time being of all sublunary matters, and thus he quite forgot to claim his horse, *Nonno*, whom he had left for the time being in the care of the stableman at Pinerolo, with whom the poor beast remained.

His long residence in Florence was due to divers causes, chief amongst them being the spell which the glories of ancient Florentine art and the beauties of the Tuscan landscape cast over the Roman painter. In those days Florence had not yet been ruthlessly modernised, and the old mediæval city formed a worthy setting for the immortal memories which make her name dear to every lover of Italy and art. The proximity of the wonderful Carrara mountains, of the pine-forests of the Pisan coast, and of the poetic melancholy of the Tuscan Maremma, all of which have offered so rich a treasury of motives to our artist's brush, was another reason for his settling there.

Soon after his arrival, in the autumn of 1859, he went on a sketching expedition to the coast near Pisa, staying at Gombo, three miles distant from the mouth of the Arno, where he made the first study for the important picture entitled the "Fiume Morto," now in the possession of Mrs. Ruthson, of London; a picture on which the artist painted at intervals during a period of thirty years. It represents an almost stagnant stretch of the Arno, on which float and circle the dead leaves falling from the trees on its wooded banks. To the right the woods are of pines and ilexes of the intensest green—all the greener by their contrast with the autumnal tints prevailing in the other foliage, in the golden elms which are losing their leaves, and the tall poplars which rise on the opposite bank. In the background we see the river receding

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PLATE XI

"IL FIUME MORTO"

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into the distance towards those blue mountains because of which, as Dante says, the Pisans cannot see Lucca. The atmospheric effect is that of a breezy autumnal day; white clouds streak the blue sky — flying wind-clouds, tinged with faintest purple to the extremest right, indicating that the sunset hour is approaching. The title of the picture, "The Dead River," is the key to the sentiment of this work; the stagnant water, the falling leaves, the suggestion of approaching evening in the atmosphere, all heightens the poetic melancholy of the scene, whilst the delicate modelling and transparency of the water, with its reflections, and the telling detail of the foreground, are studied and rendered with consummate knowledge and skill.

Besides giving us this picture, this expedition to Gombo revealed to Costa a new field for his art, for it was on this occasion that he first crossed the river and wandered as far as Bocca d'Arno, then a very wild and uninhabited spot, quite deserted but for a custom-house station, inhabited by two coastguards, with whom Nino, anxious to become better acquainted with the beauties of the country, put up for some weeks. He could not have discovered a spot better suited to his particular style of art. The grand and rugged line of the distant Carrara mountains, with their marvellous colour effects; the sandy, broken sea-coast, so characteristic of many of his foregrounds, with the pine woods coming down almost to the water's edge; the shadowy outlines of the Gorgona and the Capraia, and the still fainter indications of Corsica and Elba, closing in the horizon; the wide stretch of river slowly flowing to the sea, wonderful at dawn and evening—all these have been recorded by

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him for us in the many pictures which represent those parts.

The work he had already accomplished, and the knowledge of nature and technique which he had acquired during years of patient study, gave Costa the right to assert himself as a force in the artistic world. His love of art led him to wish not only to do good work himself, but to see his compatriots aroused from the dead level of decadence which characterised that period in Italy, as far as the fine arts were concerned. And as soon as he was settled in Florence and acquainted with the artistic world there, he began to exercise his beneficent influence in awaking in the younger generation of artists the desire and ambition for better things.

On his arrival he found the Romantic School at the height of its popularity. Ciseri, Servolini, Cassioli, Ussi, Vito d'Ancona, Lanfredini, the Genoese Barrabino, were the most reputed artists of the day, and were constantly producing extensive canvases in which costumes and stage properties figured largely. Mediæval subjects were then much in favour; Ussi was working on his big picture, "The Expulsion of the Duke of Athens," which won the gold medal at the Paris Exhibition of 1860, and which is a good example of the character and defects of the art then most admired. The scene seems to have presented itself to the artist's eye through the medium of the stage; the costumes and interior are stagey; the expressions and gestures of the personages have all the emphasis of histrionic art. It is one of those works which, greatly admired by one generation, are insufferable to another, for they are based on a passing fashion and have no

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firm foundations in truth or nature. Yet Ussi was of a younger generation than Servolini and Ciseri; and although unable to break loose from tradition, was to give us some good work, especially in his drawings and other less known works of his.

The political enthusiasms and unrest were, at this time, finding an echo in the art-student world of Florence. The young men had a feeling that perhaps mediæval draperies and stage effects were not the highest form of art, but as yet no voice had made itself heard proclaiming the right direction for their energies. The moment was propitious for the advent of a man strong in knowledge, unbiassed by old prejudices, and not afraid to speak the truth as he saw it, however distasteful it might be to his hearers, and however dangerous to his own worldly interests; and such was Costa.

In those days the resort most frequented by the Florentine artists was the Caffè Michelangelo, in the Via Larga (now Via Cavour), long since closed, but in those days a real Bohemian centre, worthy of figuring in Murger's immortal romance. Here the young painters and the young madcaps of the city met to discuss with fierce animation and enthusiasm conflicting artistic theories, to daub the walls with sketches and caricatures of their colleagues, to play off practical jokes on one another, and to invent and execute all sorts of pranks. The real masters of the place were the young, penniless, and struggling artists and students; careless, as birds, of the morrow, and merry as they; on the surface all effervescence and light-heartedness, with apparently plenty of time to waste over a game of cards or a wordy contest with a friend, but many of them possessing the stuff out

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of which the real workers in the battle of life and art are made; men who were to prove that they had the courage to break with all the time-honoured traditions which regulated the artistic world of their day and city; and the disinterestedness to produce works which they were certain not to sell, because they felt the dignity of art, and would not prostitute it to the counsels of worldly wisdom. Of such were the two brothers Serafino and Felice de Tivoli, Silvestro Lega, Cristiano Banti, Giovanni Fattori, Telemaco Signorini, Odoardo Borrini, Vincenzo Cabianca. Besides these young artists, the Caffè Michelangelo was frequented by all the members of the confraternity of the brush, resident in, or passing through, the city: the great Antonio Fontanesi, Girolamo Induno (who fought at Rome in 1849), Domenico Morelli, Achille Vertunni, Ussi, Cassioli, Vito d'Ancona, Altamura—the list might easily be prolonged till it became wearisome. The caricaturist of the company was Angelo Tricca, many of whose irresistibly funny and characteristic sketches are now preserved in the *Circolo Artistico* of Florence; Camillo Boito and Diego Martelli were the writers and journalists who were to defend the young innovators with their pen. Cristiano Banti, himself an artist mentioned in the above list, and Diego Martelli, were each to fill the most useful and necessary function of Mæcenas to their less fortunate companions, and Telemaco Signorini was to be the historian of the group, leaving us in his little book, *Caricaturisti e Caricaturati*,[1] a most readable and diverting account of the life led and the pranks played by these Florentine Bohemians. Nor must we forget here to mention the characteristic figure of the revolutionary baker,

[1] *Caricaturisti e Caricaturati*, by T. Signorini, Florence.

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Giuseppe Dolfi, ardent Republican and Mazzinian, a close friend of many artists, and one of the founders of the Caffè Michelangelo.

When Costa first arrived in Florence, fresh from camp-life and the clamour of arms, he found all these young artists still in the chrysalis stage, divided between the easy and profitable triumphs of the romantic school, and the new ideas in art which Serafino de Tivoli had brought back with him from a prolonged visit to Paris during the Exhibition of 1855. The impressionist school was then first beginning to come to the fore in France, preceded by Courbet, the realist, and, later on, championed by the painter Manet, whose clever and eccentric work was greeted with loud derision and abuse by the general public, whilst greatly interesting a certain section of the art world. De Tivoli had been much struck by them, as also by the bold effects in chiaroscuro which he had admired in the work of Décamps, Troyon, and Rosa Bonheur. He returned to Florence full of new ideas in art and new theories of technique, and at the same period Giovanni Costa first made his appearance at the Caffè Michelangelo. Alive with enthusiasm and energy, the Roman painter began to stir up the young artists, telling them, to use a characteristic phrase of his own, that "they were sons of the eagle, and should look the sun full in the face." The works he brought with him, his exhortations and advice, were decisive in their influence on the artistic movement of those days; as indeed the two foremost painters of the modern Tuscan school, the late Telemaco Signorini and Giovanni Fattori, have been the first to recognise. It was Costa, indeed, who revealed to Fattori the real nature of his remarkable artistic gift.

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The artist himself describes how he first came to know the Roman patriot and painter.

Felice de Tivoli, who, though not destined to produce work entitling him to fame, was none the less a thoughtful and original artist and a bold innovator, had become the close friend and admirer of Costa, in whom he perceived a man capable of starting a new artistic revival; and he it was who conducted Costa, soon after his arrival in Florence, to the studio of Giovanni Fattori, then in the Piazza Barbano.

The young Livornese painter had thus far distinguished himself principally as the *enfant terrible* of the art-student world of Florence. Poor as a church mouse and merry as a cricket, the record of his pranks and practical jokes fills many pages in Signorini's chronicle of the doings of the Caffè Michelangelo. But though he was known as a youth of many parts, he had not yet struck an individual note in art, and was still a follower of the romantic school. When Costa first entered his studio he found him working on a canvas representing one of those showy, mediæval subjects then so much in vogue. Whilst Fattori and De Tivoli were chatting, Costa wandered round the studio, turning over canvases, examining studies and sketches, when suddenly he broke out, exclaiming, "These masters of yours have deceived you. You have brains and you do not know it," expressing himself with characteristic and energetic Italian phraseology and gesture. These words came as a revelation to Fattori; he visited Costa in his studio, and saw there a rich collection of studies and pictures from nature, amongst others the "Women at Porto d'Anzio," and the sea-study executed in 1852 at Porto d'Anzio.

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To Fattori and his Florentine comrades these works showed the direction in which their turbulent, youthful energies should move, and henceforth at the Caffè Michelangelo practical jokes and highly seasoned tales were set aside for excited discussions on questions of art. It was during these years that the so-called school of the *Macchiaioli* arose.

Their ideas were based on Costa's teachings that truth to nature must be observed, and that the study of nature is the only true school for the artist, and also on the new ideas as to technique brought back by the brothers De Tivoli from their stay in Paris. The *Macchiaioli* were Italian impressionists, seeking to obtain the true effects of shade and sunlight by the juxtaposition of colours laid on in spots (*macchie*). All who are acquainted with the work of Costa, with his delicate finish and accurate drawing and studies, must realise at once how false it is to speak of him as one of the founders and leaders of this school; and yet Italian writers on art fall frequently into this mistake, and among this number are some who are by no means the least in the scale of importance. He himself often used to express his surprise at being spoken of as the head of the *Macchiaioli*. Costa, on the contrary, was always opposed in art to all that was mere eccentricity or wilful exaggeration; his intellect remained ever youthful and progressive, but he considered art far too seriously to approve of anything that savoured of pose or trickery. His association with this school exists in so far as his influence on the young artists of the day led them to break with the fashionable romanticism and to go to nature for inspiration. But he was never a *Macchiaiolo*, nor did he accept by any means all their theories. For

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instance, one of their artistic canons, and one that has characterised all too much Italian art for the last few years, was that the artist had no need to choose his subject, that ugliness is as worthy of his brush as beauty, that truth is always acceptable, whether it be commonplace and vulgar, or sublime. This sort of naturalism was entirely alien from Costa's art. True, he preached and practised truth to nature, and, as Giovanni Fattori notes, he proved during one of the constant discussions which took place at the Caffè Michelangelo, whilst sipping a *poncino nero* in an atmosphere laden with tobacco smoke and sparkling with youthful gaiety and enthusiasm, that even mere grass, if painted with truth, might make a picture; an utterance which induced one of the most talented of the young artists present, Vincenzo Cabianca, to undertake his celebrated study of a black pig seen in full sunlight against a white wall. But Costa's art was, above all, characterised by sentiment; he was an idealist, and thought that art should always convey an ennobling and refining impression; he worshipped truth and nature, but he did not consider that this required of the artist to choose ugliness or vulgarity in preference to beauty, or equally with it. Both are true, with this difference—the one is artistic and deserving of being immortalised by art, the other is not.

It was during these years that he painted a careful study of trees in the Boboli Gardens in Florence. In this quite small panel, which remains in his studio, two dark and straight trunks of trees stand out against a leafy background, and on the turf in the foreground hops a blackbird. This little work is executed with great delicacy, and is full of the sentiment and beauty of the verdant nooks

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which characterise those beautiful gardens. It was exhibited at the annual show held by the *Società Promotrice delle Belle Arti* at Florence; but so strange did this little bit of nature appear to the public and critics of that day, accustomed only to the artificialities of the Italian followers of Paul Delaroche, that it was merely scoffed at except by the elect few; and one critic, in reviewing the exhibition, dismissed its author with this uncompromising judgment: "A certain Costa exhibits two stove pipes," an observation which reveals what an abyss divides the art taste of that day and of this.

In 1860 the competition proposed by the minister, Bettino Ricasoli, for the best pictures representing scenes from the Italian war of independence, was finally opened, and on this occasion, though Costa did not himself enter the arena (such subjects being entirely alien to his artistic gift), it was, thanks largely to his encouragement and advice, that Italy's foremost modern painter of military subjects was made known to the public. Giovanni Fattori himself furnishes me with the anecdote which, with characteristic modesty, he mentions as deserving of note, not for his own sake, but for the memory of his dear friend. The decree promulgating the artistic competition had just been made known by the Tuscan Government, and Fattori and Nino Costa were strolling across the Piazza del Duomo, not then as we now know it—for the modern façade to Sta. Maria del Fiore had not then been begun—but beautiful, none the less, with the glorious mass of the great cathedral, Giotto's tower rising straight and pure against the sky, a very lily of stone, the quaint octagonal Baptistery where so many glorious names have been bestowed on the great citizens of Florence, and the

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graceful mediæval lodge of the Bigallo. Suddenly Fattori, who had been walking in silence for some minutes, turned on his friend. "How if I were to compete for the battle of Magenta picture? What say you?" he exclaimed. "By Jove! do not miss such a chance," replied Costa; "to work at once, and with a will, most certainly." These warm words gave the young man courage to start on the arduous undertaking, and the very next day he set to work, presenting in due time to the Commission two cartoons and two sketches, as the programme prescribed. His works won the competition, and the commission was his, resulting in a large picture in which we can trace the influence of Costa's art on the young artist, and which now hangs in the Gallery of Modern Art in Florence. From that day Fattori had found his true path, and became an artist, as he himself says, thanks to Costa.

And now Nino felt drawn to travel. He was anxious to visit Paris and London; to renew his friendship with the great artists whom he had first met during his student days in Rome and Ariccia, to compare his finished work with theirs, to challenge the judgment of a larger public than the narrow one of the Italian cities, and to enlarge his knowledge of life and art as then headed by Corot, Troyon, Rousseau, and Millet, in the great French capital.

His "Women at Porto d'Anzio," when exhibited in Rome in 1856, had been very favourably noticed by the critic of the *Débats*, and armed with this and other works, and with a whole collection of studies showing his artistic development and personality, he set out for Paris in time to exhibit at the Salon of 1862.

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CHAPTER VI

VISITS TO PARIS AND ENGLAND, 1862–63

WHEN Costa reached Paris in the spring of 1862, bringing with him his "Women at Porto d'Anzio" and a whole series of studies from nature, he found French art in a moment of exceptional vigour and glory.

The neo-classic school founded by Louis David, true offspring of the titanic heroisms and Roman attitude of mind of the great revolution, after reaching its zenith in chronicling the Napoleonic epic, gradually, with the decay of the great age which had given it birth, transformed itself in the works of Gros and Géricault, and gave way to the Romantic school, represented in all its splendour by the great Delacroix, the Victor Hugo of French art, and also by the refined and thoughtful Delaroche, who, however, lacked the fiery genius of the painter of Dante and Virgil crossing the Styx. Side by side with these great representatives of romantic and historic art a school had arisen, still more modern in feeling, the *plein air* landscapists, Corot, Troyon, D'Aubigny, Rousseau, Français.

In the case of these artists it is interesting to recall the opinion expressed by Costa, already quoted, that landscape is essentially an English art imported into France and Italy. This glorious group of artists may be said to have had the new direction along which their art was to develop pointed out to them by the two pictures

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which Constable exhibited in the Salon in 1824, where they won the award for merit and were purchased for the Louvre. These works came as a revelation of truth, simplicity, and luminousness to the Englishman's French contemporaries. Nor must we forget, in this connection, Bonnington, English by birth, and one of the first to break loose from the classic tradition. Besides these artists, greater yet than they, Jean François Millet, the peasant painter, who was to reveal the soul of the dumb, toiling, peasant masses, who have always formed the real strength and backbone of France, was struggling through obscurity and neglect towards that fame which was only fully to crown his efforts when he himself was gone.

In 1862 the second Empire was at the height of its power, and Louis Napoleon spared no pains in his attempt to make of Paris the artistic and fashionable centre of Europe. A triumph at the Salon was then considered as the official consecration of a painter, and, indeed, with such a generation of artists and art critics (amongst which latter class we may mention the names of Théophile Gautier, Charles Baudelaire, Edouard Bertin, to confine ourselves to the best) as jury, such recognition was no small honour.

At the Salon, then, Costa exhibited the important work, "Women loading Wood on Boats at Porto d'Anzio," which at once won for him the admiration and friendship of the French artists, and he was greeted as an honoured colleague by Corot, Troyon, Gleyre, Décamps, Rousseau, Ricard, and Hébert. Nor was his work on view only at the official gallery. During the same month another canvas of his, "A Study of Olive Trees," was exhibited at the Salon des Réfusés, where it had the honour of

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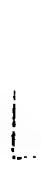

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PLATE XII

SEA STUDY: PORTO D'ANZIO

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being hung between Whistler's "White Girl" and a picture by Gleyre, and whence it was immediately sold.

Encouraged by this success, Costa showed to his artist friends a whole series of his studies from nature, the fruit of his labours in the Roman Campagna and along the Tuscan sea-coast, which came as a revelation to his French comrades after the style of work which had characterised the Italian section at the International Exhibition held in 1859. Meissonier, then at the height of his fame, came twice to visit the collection; and Corot was so struck by a sea-piece with a fishing-boat, the first marine study our artist had ever made, painted at Porto d'Anzio in 1852, that he, who was justly famous for the exquisite fluidity and transparency of his water, wished to compare the Roman artist's work with a study of his own.

Costa willingly acceded to the flattering request, and on the appointed Sunday he repaired to Corot's studio, where he found the two pictures placed on easels side by side. A glance satisfied him that they did not clash with one another, and were well matched. The jury, to whom the delicate question of the respective merits of the two pictures had been deferred, was ready grouped about the *atelier*—an assembly of beautiful ladies, whom the French artist, with the gallantry characteristic of his race, had requested to act as arbiters on this occasion. Corot was very witty and brilliant, and the company followed the lead of the host. The ladies, who, in Costa's words, positively shone with good-humour and merriment, pronounced the two sea-pieces to be alike excellent. And when the verdict had been given, Corot publicly embraced his guest, saying, "If Hobbema were still in our midst, he

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would have embraced you; allow me, in his stead, to embrace you in the name of the French artists."

After this fraternal *accolade* the most brotherly relations prevailed between the two painters, and, as long as he was in Paris, Costa had the key to Corot's studio, and was free to examine at leisure the rich treasure of the artist's studies from nature.

Talking of art, Corot used to advise Costa not to be too truthful. "You must exaggerate values," he would say; "no two things in nature are just alike. When I see two things alike I say God has made a mistake, and I add on to one." Another of his counsels was, "When you paint trees do them so that the birds can fly into them and build nests there."

The distinguished artists he associated with during those months in Paris were all greatly interested in Costa's work, and anxious to encourage him to continue courageously, indifferent to the criticisms of the day, urging him not to expect from the public the appreciation which he deserved. From them he heard the tale of their own difficulties, of the battle they had had to fight before their work began to be appreciated.

Troyon—one of the first and most powerful of the French realists, belonging to the group of artists who, between the years 1832–38, opened up new horizons for French art by their revolt against the emphatic conventions of the Empire, and whose studies of animals and landscape remain such an enduring monument to his name—Troyon told Costa how, up to the age of forty-four, almost all his pictures had been refused at exhibitions, and that the outlook for him seemed so black that the person who had encouraged him to become an artist had, on his death,

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left him 1000 francs a year out of remorse at having pushed into an artistic career a man incapable of earning his livelihood at that profession.

Décamps, the strong and original painter of oriental landscape and genre pictures, was another of Costa's Parisian friends. He used to complain that easel pictures could never really be considered finished, as they are subject to change their surroundings, and for this reason he would have preferred executing large decorative work, and was very anxious to obtain government commissions for mural decoration. In fact, it was with this end in view that he illustrated the story of Samson in the powerful series of designs which still bear witness to his powers; but, spite of all this, the longed-for commissions never came in.

On the whole this, Costa's first stay in Paris, was an important incident in his artistic career. It enlarged his knowledge of modern art, and made him known to a wide circle of artists and art lovers. Before returning to Florence he made a short stay in England, going to London and staying with his friend Leighton, who made him known to G. F. Watts and Burne-Jones, whose work was just then beginning to attract much attention. This first visit to London was, however, of brief duration, and before the end of the year he was back in Italy.

It was during the few months he spent in Florence, between the return from his first journey and before starting on his second, that an incident occurred which was very much talked of at the time, and which, as the work of art which gave rise to it is now in our national collection at South Kensington, is not without a certain special interest to the English public.

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Costa himself told me the tale, and I cannot do better than give it here in his own words.

"One day, quite unexpectedly, Cristiano Banti" (the artist and art-patron spoken of in a previous chapter) "knocked me up at six in the morning. He was greatly excited, and exclaimed: 'You must get up at once, and come straight off with me to see a bust of Savonarola, a most characteristic work of the golden age of our art, which is in the possession of a man who sells charcoal. Come, we must do everything to prevent its leaving Florence. An Englishman, Spence, who lives at Fiesole, is after it already, and he will buy it if we are not quick.' This was news indeed, and off we went. In the back room of a dirty little charcoal shop in Borgo Ognissanti, we found this bust, a coloured terra-cotta. It had all the appearance of being the work of one of the great artists of the *quattro-cento*, and, after carefully examining it, Banti and I decided to buy it between us straight off for the sum of 10,000 francs (£400 sterling).

"The bust was removed to Banti's studio, and all the artists and art connoisseurs in Florence came to see it. The sculptor Dupré, perhaps the greatest sculptor of modern Italy, was enthusiastic about it. He pronounced it one of the masterpieces of fifteenth-century art, and opined that it might be a youthful work of Michelangelo's, or, more probably, of an artist who surpassed even Buonarroti in that style, Luca della Robbia. He begged leave to bring his daughter, herself a sculptress of note, to the studio, as he wished her to admire this great work of art. Frederick Leighton was enthusiastic in his admiration, as indeed were all the artists who saw it.

"So great was the rush of people to view the bust,

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that Banti's house was always crowded, and this disturbed and annoyed him; so we decided to exhibit it at the Palazzo Riccardi, charging a small entrance fee, the product of which was devoted to a deserving charity.

"Many people wished to purchase it, amongst others the Grand Duchess Marie of Russia, who pronounced it so beautiful that a temple ought to have been raised to lodge it in.

"I was very anxious that the government or the municipality should acquire it. We had bought it in the hope of saving it for Italy, and we addressed ourselves with this object to the directors of the Florentine galleries, and to other important and influential persons, amongst whom was Pasquale Villari; but though they had heard great things of the bust, and though we were willing to sell it for the 10,000 francs we had given, they did not come to the point, saying that one had to be very careful in such matters, as there were a lot of false terra-cotta busts about. Indeed, rumours were beginning to be circulated to the effect that the Savonarola bust was a forgery, the work of the same hand which had created the Benivieni bust now in the Louvre. I heard this, but paid no attention to the matter. My art, and later on politics, called my attention elsewhere.

"However, on my return from Mentana, in 1867, as the matter was still before the public, I went straight to the man who was accused of having modelled the bust, Bastianini by name, and asked him outright if he were indeed responsible for it. He answered me: 'Yes, it is my work; I am sorry; it was not meant for you.' 'I am sorry for you,' I replied, 'that with such great talent you should take to forgeries.' 'We live in a thankless

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age,' he answered; 'times are hard for men who have to live by their art.' And he proceeded to tell me that he had had for model a certain cobbler who was porter at the cigar factory, and that the bust had been fired at the pottery works of Cantagalli."

When Costa had thus satisfied himself as to the real authenticity of the bust, he went straight off and published in all the papers a declaration to the effect that the bust of Savonarola, which had been thought to be one of the best works of the fifteenth century, was now known to be the work of Bastianini of Fiesole. This was indeed a bolt from the blue, and one which the antiquity dealers of Florence would have given a great deal to avert, had Costa been a man whom they could have approached. After this there was not a genuine thing to be found at the dealers. Suspicious distrust in such matters had become a disease with the art-buying public.

The bust was then deposited, as the avowed work of Bastianini, by its owners in the sculpture galleries in the Museum at St. Mark's, in Florence, where it remained till 1883, at which date, as the director and committee of the Florentine museums had not yet made up their minds to purchase it, Costa and Banti determined to withdraw their property. The director of the museums, Signore Donati, who had seen a rather strong letter which Costa had written to Banti on this subject, addressed the Roman artist, then in Siena, begging him to alter his decision and leave so noble a work of art in the gallery of St. Mark's. This appeal drew from Costa an answer, from which we quote the following passage:—

". . . For my part, I am not in the lucky position to be able to make any longer such a rich loan to the

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royal museums of Florence, and, even if I were wealthy enough to do so, I do not think that I should be justified in so doing, nor that it would be useful to the artistic criterion on the value of a work of modern art. For my part I think that the Italians, and, above all, the Italian Government, which intends to burden itself with works of art, ought to know and make known that a modern work of art, when it is excellent, has the same value as ancient art, as that art which can be sold abroad.

"Now Bastianini, if only for this bust, must be recognised as one of the greatest modern glories which Italy has so far had in the field of art, and if his morality was not on a par with his genius, the fault is largely that of our country, which nowadays will not recognise a living man who is gifted with sentiment and talent. That this work of Bastianini's is perhaps the only modern work which can be compared with the finest specimens of renaissance sculpture, has been declared by the public. Dupré stated it in writing, and his opinion was shared by the greatest artists of our day, when it was thought that the author of the Savonarola could no longer be benefited or harmed thereby. Indeed, with this work of his Bastianini gave a splendid lesson to all our modern innovators, naturalists, realists, impressionists, &c., for he showed that only an intense love of truth, coupled with the study of our fine old works of art, can still produce new, original work equal to those old masterpieces which are the boast and pride of our country. . . ."

In the end the bust was placed by its owners in the South Kensington Museum, which after some years bought it for the original sum of 10,000 francs; and here it now figures, exhibited as the work of Bastianini—for whom

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Costa, by means of Leighton, obtained a commission for reproductions of the Borgian apartment in the Vatican and the Farnesina Palace in Rome. These were modelled by Bastianini, and painted by Count Rossi Scotti, a pupil of Costa's, and were purchased by the South Kensington Museum.

Costa judged Bastianini to possess an artistic organisation of the first order; but he was a man born out of his age, and he found himself deprived of the atmosphere which was necessary to him in order to produce original work. He was a man of the people, son of a woman who sold hot chestnuts in the streets, and had all the natural vivacity of intelligence and artistic feeling which distinguishes the natives of Tuscany. His artistic gift was that of a fifteenth-century man; he saw with the eyes of that epoch, and when he attempted work quite independent of that style, he was no longer himself, no longer great. Costa obtained for him a commission from an Englishman who wanted to have a figure with a fourteenth-century type of head, attired in modern costume, dressed by a fashionable tailor. Bastianini undertook this work; but, as one might perhaps have expected, it was a failure.

Costa had not known him very long, when Bastianini, after a few days' illness, was found dead in his studio.

A story like this is a sad reflection on our age, when merit, such as that shown by a man whose work could be mistaken by competent judges for that of Michelangelo or Della Robbia, has to resort to trickery and forgery, to disguise his name, annihilate his personality, and forego all the joys of well-deserved applause, in order to earn a scanty livelihood by his handiwork.

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But we must now pick up again the thread of our history, and return to Costa.

In the spring of 1863, Leighton wrote to his friend suggesting that he should go to England, and stay for some time with George Mason, his comrade of the early Roman days.

After his marriage, in 1857, Mason had settled down in a ruinous old mansion-house, Wetley Abbey, in Staffordshire, His great artistic gift had not yet been recognised by the public, to whom he was practically unknown; he had got into bad health and bad circumstances; struggling with the difficulties of providing for a rapidly growing family; suffering from the intellectual isolation of his position. In these difficult circumstances Frederick Leighton came to his aid. He went to stay with his old friend, cheered him with his companionship, urged him on with his work, helped him in the most delicate manner in his financial difficulties, and in a letter which, owing to the constant moves and uncertainty of a patriot's life in those days, has, unfortunately, been lost, along with much other correspondence of those early years, he begged Giovanni Costa to go to Mason, to cheer him up and help him to work.

I know there exists among certain people a feeling that the difficulties through which a man whose talents or genius have made him famous, has passed, should always be disguised, and who think it derogatory to an artist to let such facts transpire. To my mind nothing is more honourable in a life than that firmness of purpose and pride of intellect which braces a man, conscious of his own gifts, to pass through the mill of poverty rather than to deviate from the path which he knows to be his own,

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which makes him true to his nobler self in spite of all temptations to the contrary. And few things are pleasanter to relate than those cases, all too rare, when one great artist, better favoured by fortune, comes to the assistance of another, all petty jealousies, all false conventionalities giving way to a broad sense of brotherly solidarity between minds capable of understanding each other, and characters which can justly appreciate their mutual worth. Any other point of view strikes me as due to that snobbish feeling which is the besetting vice of the English people. And in the case in point, surely nothing could be more honourable to all parties concerned than the truth as to their mutual relations at this period.

Costa at once fell in with his friend's suggestion, and the result was another journey to England in the early summer of 1863.

He found that Leighton had in no sense exaggerated Mason's condition. He was in such poor health, suffering principally from his heart, that he could only work a few hours a week, although he had several commissions in hand which Leighton had for the most part procured him. Among the works he had begun was one of a child looking up at some trees, inspired by Hood's verse—

"I remember, I remember
The fir-trees dark and high,
I used to think their slender tops
Were close against the sky;
It was a childish ignorance,
But now it is scant joy
To know I'm farther off from Heaven
Than when I was a boy"—

perhaps allegorical of the painter's despondent condition at this period; and another, now in the royal collection at

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Windsor, which was purchased from Mason at the time for £60, and sold to Queen Victoria after his death for £600.

Costa's advent was a great boon to his friend. The two artists wandered all over the country-side together, and Costa was greatly struck by the beauty of the English landscape, noticing the fine race of peasantry in that part of the Black Country, which reminded him of the Etruscan type, a curious coincidence, as that part of the country is locally known as Etruria. Of rain and smoke, indeed, there appeared to be more than enough to the Roman, accustomed to the lucid transparency of his native atmosphere; but he was none the less impressed by the idyllic nature of the scenery, the beauties of which he kept pointing out to Mason, whose eyes had been blinded by the splendours of Italy to the more modest charms of his native landscape.

During the three months of his stay he himself made the studies for three pictures on which he worked whilst Mason was executing the two we have mentioned above. Of these one was "An Idyll in the Black Country," now owned by Lord Carlisle. This picture, which was exhibited at Oldham in 1883, shows some girls, for one of whom George Mason's daughter served as model, wading through a rush-grown pool, surrounded by lush green banks which shelve down to the water's edge, and by the fine trees, so typical of English landscape. In the background some cows are grazing in a field, and a village and glimpses of the distant hills of Staffordshire are seen through the trees. The two others he entitled "Iron, Fire, and Water," and "A Path through the Woods."

In these English landscapes, and in several others

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executed at a later period, Costa has rendered with singular felicity the characteristics of English scenery—the moist atmosphere, the grey, breezy skies, the rich luscious green of grass and foliage. His treatment of landscapes in these works is quite different from that of the Italian subjects, in which the eye is drawn to the golden distances, the lapis-lazuli and purple of far-off mountains, whereas in England the flower-enamelled greens of the foreground rest and attract the eye. He noted that English trees have a different character to those of Italy; the high winds and rough weather to which they are exposed bend and twist their boughs, lending angularity to their outline, whereas under the milder Italian skies the trees grow with graceful, undulating contours.

In his landscapes Costa was always constructive, building up the scene with knowledge, based on careful observation of the main lines which give character to the scenery. This sense of the importance of line distinguishes his work, and was doubtless due largely to the fact that his artistic education was made in the Roman Campagna, the grandiose beauty of which depends on the bold sweeping lines, on the general proportions and colour values, not on mere prettiness or distracting variety of detail. This way of looking at scenery is exemplified in his observations on English country. His impression of England was of a country well cut even to its austere cliffs; where the clouds are felt to come afar from over the Atlantic, soaring across the land; and all seems fitted to resist the gigantic flight of the elements. It was this aspect of English scenery which seems most to have impressed the Italian painter, not the peaceful domestic

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beauty which is also its own; though, as we have seen in his observations and impressions of the Black Country, he was not blind to its idyllic character. He was struck by the psychological differences which the diverse natural conditions of England and Italy produce in the inhabitants. In the English country he heard no human song, whereas Italian peasants are never silent; the Tuscan country-side is musical with the *rispetti* and *stornelli* which the young men and women sing as they dig, or sow, or reap; the peasants sing as they peel the maize through the serene summer nights at Perugia; the birds alone make music in the English country. In Italy the sky seems to belong to the land; the silver clouds swim in the air without a threat; the glorious sunlight bathes and vivifies everything, imparting to all it touches a buoyant, pagan sense of the joy of life. The love of reality is felt in Italy, the fear of reality in England; an attitude of mind which does not detract from the greatness of the inhabitants, in whom it produces a certain austerity and awed religiousness before the stern and terrible aspects of nature.

At the end of his three months' stay at Wetley Abbey, Costa had the pleasure of realising that his friend was in much better health; the helpful friendship of Leighton and Costa had rescued the great painter from the disheartened despondency into which illness, isolation, and financial difficulties had plunged him. Before bidding him good-bye Costa, however, was anxious that Mason should accompany him on a visit to London and Paris, where he wished him to be put in touch with the great minds of the day, and to see the best efforts of contemporary art. They stayed together a few weeks in both cities, and from Paris Mason returned to his home, leaving Costa

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in the French capital, where he wished to stay and study for a little while longer.

The admirable work of the Barbizon school, landscapes such as Corot's "Étang de la ville d'Avray," made him desirous of acquainting himself with the charming scenery in the neighbourhood of Paris, more especially with the forest of Fontainebleau. On visiting it he was so charmed with its beauties that he decided to stay there for some time and paint. He put up at Marlotte, where a small colony of artists was then settled; students mostly, who laughed at the Roman for his somewhat halting French and his large characteristic nose, though one artist among them, a certain Villers, said to the others one day within Costa's hearing, after looking at a study he was making, "*L'Italien n'est pas si bête comme il en a l'air.*"

During this stay at Fontainebleau he made several studies, painting at the *Mare aux fées*, the *Gorge aux loups*, and other picturesque spots. Two of these French studies remain in his studio, and on looking at them one is at once struck by the faculty which Costa possessed of realising the essential qualities of landscape. One is a study of oak-trees. To the right a group of tall fine trees in full summer foliage; faggots of cut branches lie at their feet; to the left a rich undergrowth of green shrubs; a small figure, wearing the blue blouse of the French peasant, tramps along the path in the centre, accentuating by his presence the prevailing silence; a blue distance closes in the horizon. Costa has many studies of Italian scenery which would almost answer this description; but a glance at the pale blue sky, broken by vaporous masses of white cloud, the whole sense of a cooler, moister atmosphere, so different to the brilliant, clear skies of Italy, against which

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everything stands out with such clearness and solidity of outline, tells us at once that we are in a northern clime. It is summer, with all the rich, heavy colouring of that season; but French, not Italian, summer. And this, again, is the impression left by the other study, remarkable for a sense of space and atmosphere, in which the importance of the foreground for giving character to this style of landscape is at once perceived. The tilled fields, divided up into patches of darker and paler greens, in which the peasant women bend over their work, are what catch the eye, completed in this instance by the dark-green tree masses of the middle distance, and by the blue wooded hills on the horizon, which in an Italian landscape, standing out with bold sweep of line against the azure or gold-suffused sky, would at once have arrested our attention, causing the foreground to retreat into a subsidiary position of complementary detail.

In the leafy depths of the forest of Fontainebleau during these months the inspiration came to him for a picture which was to be one of the great efforts of his life, one in which he wished to embody his conception of nature with human beauty, the perfect female nude, as its supreme creation. He himself told me how the idea of the work first came to him. He was painting in the forest at one of the studies he was then engaged on. A girl, a friend of many of the artists who worked in the neighbourhood, and who served them often as model, known as the "Lioness," for her rich mass of tawny hair, was lying in the grass not far off. Suddenly she rose, and, raising both arms, shook from her hair the autumn leaves which had fallen on her as she lay. The vision of the picture, "La France se renouvelle toujours," then rose before the painter.

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He knew that his art was landscape, the interpretation of nature; but in woman he saw nature's most beautiful work, and in this picture he wished to represent her in the midst of nature, at one with her. The "Lioness," who had a great feeling for art, consented for art's sake to pose to the artist nude in the green recesses of the forest, a living nymph—the luminous flesh tints heightened by the sunlight penetrating through the thick, verdant foliage; and thus the first study of this which was to be his largest, most ambitious picture, was done from life, in the midst of that nature of which he wished to make it a noble, almost symbolic expression.

The life-size female figure occupies the centre of this canvas. The nymph stands on the mossy edge of a pool, with both arms raised, and the bust inclined to the right, as she shakes from her mass of dull gold hair the yellow autumn leaves, and leans forward with downcast eyes to gaze at her image mirrored in the water at her feet, which is but suggested in the picture. To the left, one of those large boulders, characteristic of the Fontainebleau scenery, heightens with its dark mass the luminous flesh tints. A tuft of rushes grows at its base. The moist, mossy foreground is strewn with withered leaves; a red earthenware pitcher lies to the right of the nymph. Behind her rise the tall trunks of lofty trees, through the thick foliage of which, though we do not see it, we feel that the light which bathes the picture has penetrated. In the background the undergrowth of the forest is somewhat roughly rendered. The artist has evidently concentrated all his powers on the beautiful figure. It reveals him to us in a new light as a first-rate painter of the nude. The nymph is executed with so much solidity and grace as to have

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PLATE XIII

"LA FRANCE SE RENOUVELLE TOUJOURS"

In the possession of the Costa family

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many of the qualities of Greek statuary; one can almost see her step out of the canvas; the attitude is instinct with life; the figure perfect in proportion, fully developed, yet with all the grace and charm of youthful womanhood in its early prime, and conceived in the Greek spirit of perfect chastity, a crowning work of nature's, nothing more.

On this picture the artist was to work more or less during the whole remainder of his life. From Paris he took it with him to Florence, where Fattori remembers being privileged to see it in his studio—for Costa was always jealous of showing this work, which he considered as his most important effort. From Florence it went with him to Rome when, in 1865, he went thither once more to take part in the struggle for liberty. Flying, a proscript from his native city, after Mentana, this canvas followed him once more to Florence, and, after 1870, it re-entered Rome, capital of United Italy, where Costa at last fixed his residence. The alterations which Costa made in this work were very numerous; to use his own expression it was the *anima vilis* on which he made his artistic experiments. In his eyes it was never finished, as indeed was the case with almost all his works, however complete they might appear to be to others. The title of the picture was also often changed; and it is known to his friends as the "Nymph of Fontainebleau," the "Woman at the Well," the "Venus in the Wood," as well as by the poetic name to which I have adhered, and which the painter bestowed on it after the disasters of the Franco-German war, as expressive of his faith in the destinies of the French nation. The habit of christening two different pictures by the same name, and of changing the titles of his works, when, indeed, he gave them any title at all, was a very constant one with Costa,

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and is productive of no small confusion when talking of his works.

There is little doubt that when the Italian art of the past fifty years shall have entered the domain of historical criticism this work will occupy an important place therein. It has been the inspiration from which have sprung more than one Venus of these latter days; it was a sincere effort after poetic truth in feeling and execution; and was, in its day, a new departure in Italian art. It is one of the painter's most important works, though not one of those most characteristic of his special gifts. During his lifetime it was never exhibited; indeed it was one of the works which he was most chary of showing, and only a certain privileged number of friends knew it. After his death it was one of the five pictures of his which, at the special request of the committee, were hung at the International Art Exhibition held in Venice in 1903.

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CHAPTER VII

INSURRECTIONARY MOVEMENTS IN ROME, 1864–67

WHILST Costa had been fighting the battles of art in Florence and abroad, the destinies of Italy had been rapidly hurrying on towards their final solution. 1860 had witnessed the heroic exploits of the Thousand; and by February 1861, on the fall of Gaeta, the whole of Southern Italy was in the hands of the Italian Government. The Papal States, with the exception of the territory immediately round Rome, known as the Patrimony of St. Peter's, had already been annexed at the end of a three weeks' campaign in the September of 1860. On the 18th of February 1861, the first Italian Parliament met in Turin, with the Florentine, Baron Ricasoli, for Prime Minister, and now the thoughts of all patriots were centred on Rome and Venice.

Already, however, the harmonious unanimity, which had characterised the national feeling previous to the campaign of 1859, was breaking down. Political wire-pulling and interested intrigue were beginning to blot the pure page of the Italian *Risorgimento*. Cavour's jealousy of Garibaldi, and hatred and mistrust of Mazzini and of all movements inspired by popular enthusiasm and idealism, which had led to the painful scenes between him and the Italian hero in the Chamber at Turin, prepared the way for the tragedy of Aspromonte in 1862, in which the Italian Government, headed by

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Rattazzi, found itself forced into the ignominious position of acting as policeman to the Pope and the French Emperor. And behind Cavour came a whole set of politicians, lacking his genius and excelling in his defects, who were to make it possible to say that the Italians only came to Rome when dragged there by the hair of their heads. These were the men who, on the death of Cavour on June 6, 1861, came to the fore, playing all too prominent a part in Italian politics from that time forth.

During the eleven years which elapsed between 1853 and 1864, the date of Costa's return to Florence, the National Roman Committee, which Checchetelli, aided by Costa and other Liberals, had been so active in forming out of the National Association—born upon the morrow of the fall of the Roman Republic—had continued to be the one organisation round which the hopes of patriots had centred: for the Committee of Action (Comitato d'Azione), by maintaining an uncompromisingly republican attitude, had failed to win general sympathy, which was then favourable to the programme of a United Italy under Victor Emanuel, and had consequently remained isolated, a staunch if unavailing protest against the opportunism of the many.

Most of the noted Roman patriots had been compelled during these years to leave their native city, taking refuge elsewhere, for the most part in Turin and Florence, which had become centres for the exiles from the other parts of the Peninsula, and from these cities they continued to direct, as far as absentees could, the agitation carried on within the city walls by the National Roman Committee. The more ardent spirits, however, were far

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from being satisfied with the activity and energy of the resident section of that body.

Till 1859 the impossibility, in Rome, of anything much beyond a peaceful propaganda, directed with the object of keeping the ideal of a free and united Italy before the minds of the Italians, had been generally recognised; and this propaganda the National Committee, not without considerable risk and danger, by means of its press, of its branch societies, and of its wide correspondence, had carried on. But, after the events of 1859, many thought that the Committee had not risen to the exigencies of the situation. It was thought that it should have availed itself of the fact that the French Emperor had constituted himself champion of Italian liberty to openly call upon the Romans to join their Piedmontese brethren in the fight against Austria, and it was argued that it would have been difficult for even Napoleon III. to disapprove in Rome that conduct which by proclamation he had urged in the rest of Italy. True, large numbers of volunteers had spontaneously joined the Italian army, but it was thought that the Committee should have availed itself of the popular enthusiasm of the moment in order to arouse a movement favourable to the liberty of Rome. Instead of this, timidity, subservience towards France, and the fear of offending Louis Napoleon characterised its conduct, and this attitude only grew more and more pronounced as the months passed by. In fact, after 1860, the action of the Roman National Committee had, in the opinion of many of the exiles, as expressed in a pamphlet published by one of them under the pseudonym of *Filodema*, narrowed down its sphere of activity to keeping the Italian Government informed

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about the brigandage which the Pope and the ex-king of Naples fostered in the hopes that it might prove dangerous to their enemies even if not useful to themselves; and though this sort of private information bureau doubtless had its use, it was hardly satisfactory as the principal occupation of a revolutionary body.

For some time the Italian Government had been paying a subsidy of 5000 lire a month to this Committee for the alleged purpose of enabling the revolutionary party in Rome to acquire arms, and to meet the expenses entailed in helping exiles and prisoners, and in keeping up the clandestine correspondence and information service, on the efficiency of which so much depends in such cases. The Roman exiles, however, thought that this subsidy was not being used to the best purpose, and it was clear to the more enthusiastic and impatient that the National Committee needed stirring up and thoroughly reorganising if it was to become an efficient instrument for further revolutionary action,

At this juncture of affairs Costa returned to Italy, and to him did Checchetelli—who, from Turin, where he had established himself, still directed largely the work of the Roman National Committee—apply, when he wished to find some one suitable for the delicate and difficult mission of inquiry and reorganisation. Our artist had not contemplated reassuming just then an active part in politics; he was, in fact, on the point of making another visit to France, whither the work he had begun at Fontainebleau drew him. But Checchetelli, as the following letter shows, succeeded in persuading him to undertake the patriotic task, and Costa, when he once realised that his work was necessary to the realisa-

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tion of his ideals, accepted the duty in no half-hearted spirit.

The following extract from a letter, addressed by Giuseppe Checchetelli to some friends of his in the National Roman Committee, and which now exists amongst the unpublished correspondence bearing on the Italian Revolution preserved in the Biblioteca Vittorio Emanuele in Rome, shows how high an opinion this patriot had of Costa, and of the importance which his co-operation would impart to any movement or project. In the original document the name of Giovanni Costa is written in cypher, as the correspondence between the exiles and the revolutionists within the city walls was clandestine, and had it fallen into the hands of the police, would have entailed serious consequences on those mentioned therein; but the recipient has pencilled the name of Costa above the figures which stand for it.

The letter is dated from Turin, June 14, 1864, and contains the following passage: "Nino Costa will be coming to Rome, if he is not already there. He is one of our old supporters, of excellent principles, energetic character, and most useful both on his own account and on that of his family connections. He was wishing to go to Paris; but I have induced him to go to Rome, where there is need of men without fear and without reproach. I beg you to receive him in your midst, or, rather, to do all in your power to induce him to help you to bear the burden you are carrying. I am sure he will not refuse. If my advice has any weight with you, *look him up immediately*, make him the proposal, and he will not only accept, but will be able to suggest to you others with whom you may strengthen your ranks. The time is

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approaching when you will have the honour of laying the corner-stone of the liberation of Rome. Not by means of unwise tumults, but by serious and well-considered action. Therefore it appears to me necessary that you should share the responsibility with as many upright people as possible; and not only must they be upright, but also capable of forwarding our cause, and he is such."

Costa accepted the honourable and onerous charge, and though the part he had already taken in the revolutionary movement made it extremely dangerous for him to return to Rome for political agitation, he set off without hesitation. He was once more in the Papal city, which he entered by Porta del Popolo, on horseback, disguised as a *buttero* (the name given to the men who tend and break in the wild horses in the Roman Campagna), with the goad (*pungolo*) in his hand, before the 24th of June 1864, as we see by this sentence in a letter of that date written by Checchetelli to the same friends: "I am certain that the person mentioned in my last has now arrived and has been received with open arms; he is, as you know, ours from of old, and will add strength to your actions."

On arriving in the city without having aroused the attention of the police, who would very probably have refused him a passport in view of the critical state of public affairs, Costa settled down between an apartment he had in the Palazzo Bernini and his studio in the Via Margutta, where he was soon followed by the large canvas of the "France se renouvelle toujours," and commenced his investigations into the condition of the *Comitato Nazionale Romano.*

At the date of Costa's arrival this association counted a membership of 12,000 Romans, each of whom was

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pledged to a monthly contribution to the funds, which were intended to be used for furthering the revolutionary propaganda, and for aiding by all means the reunion of Rome as capital with the rest of Italy.

Gradually the common fate of most political organisations had overtaken the National Roman Committee. The primitive revolutionary ardour and enthusiasm had cooled down with time, the leaders had become semi-official personages mixed up with the political notabilities who, from the Piedmontese court, set the tune of Italian politics. As long as Cavour lived this policy was characterised by continuity, prudence, and sagacity, resulting from a clearly defined ideal pursued steadily by all means which did not run counter to his monarchical and unitarian principles. And this ideal was—in the field of politics a united Italy with Rome as capital, ruled by a prince of the House of Savoy; in the religious field, a free church in a free state; and however much we may be out of sympathy with Cavour's attitude towards certain personalities and events, one cannot but respect and admire his steady, unflinching conduct and long-headed policy.

Louis Napoleon, after helping Italy in the campaign of 1859, had once more become the most serious obstacle to her final unity and independence. With his usual servility towards the clerical party, he continued to act the part of armed protector of the Papal pretensions to temporal power in Rome. It was his threat to consider any invasion of the Papal States as a declaration of war on the part of Italy, which forced the Prime Minister, Urbano Rattazzi, a fatally weak and dangerously intriguing politician, to oppose by force of arms Garibaldi's advance on the Eternal City in November 1862, an episode which

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ended in the sorrowful and shameful page of Aspromonte; and whilst the cabinet presided over by Minghetti was in power, from March 1863 to September 1864, it was the attitude of the French Government in conjunction with the intriguing of the moderate party, headed by the so-called Florentine *Consorteria*—at whose head stood the Baron Bettino Ricasoli, Ubaldino Peruzzi, and Cambray Digni—that led to the signing of the deplorable Convention of September 1864, by which the Italian Government agreed to protect the Papal States from all attacks from without, on condition that France withdrew the military garrison which she held there; and, as if in pledge of the intention to abandon the dream of Rome as capital, the seat of Government was removed from Turin, for centuries the capital of the kings of Savoy, to Florence. Massimo d'Azeglio, in a letter to his friend Rendù, narrated that Count Pasolini had exclaimed to Cannero, when begging him to favour this convention: "At last, thank God, we are freed from the Roman question" (*Finalmente, grazie a Dio, siamo liberati da Roma*), and this exclamation is the key to the feelings which inspired the idea of removing the capital to the city on the Arno. The Piedmontese were more than indignant when they realised that Turin was to lose its ancient importance; whilst the moderate clerical party, and the Florentine statesmen with Ricasoli at their head, were most anxious that the recent pre-eminence acquired by their city should not be lost to it in favour of Rome, and were eloquent in proclaiming that only moral force was to be used in the pursuit of that aim which spite of everything still continued to be the aspiration of Italy. Hence the constant search for excuses and expedients which might retard the day of final

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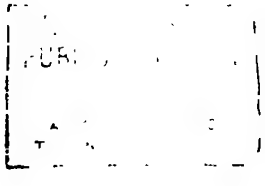

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PLATE XIV

STUDY OF TREES

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achievement; hence the constant harping on the threat of French invasion, used as a scarecrow whenever any steps were taken to interfere with the claims of the Pope to temporal power; hence the intriguing and double dealing which characterised their policy where Rome was concerned; hence, finally, Villa Glori and Mentana.

The terms of the convention which bound the Italian Government to defend the Papal territory from all attacks from the outside, left but one hope for the reunion of Rome, and that was that the Roman populace itself should rise against the tyrannical and bigoted rule of the priests, and free itself by an insurrectionary movement from within. In accordance with the Convention the French garrison left the Papal territory in November 1865, and was replaced by Papal volunteers, recruited for the most part from very low elements in the populations of France, Switzerland, and Ireland; and these troops, by their insolent and riotous conduct, soon won themselves the hatred and contempt of the population.

Costa was not long in coming to the conclusion that the Roman exiles had not been wrong in accusing the National Committee of lukewarmness and of a general desire to keep matters quiet, discouraging any thought of action or active propaganda, substituting soothing words and formulæ for dangerous deeds. But it was now evident that the Prussian alliance would lead to a new war against Austria.

In June 1866 Italy and Prussia, united in an offensive and defensive alliance, declared war against Austria. On this occasion the pettiness of the men who surrounded Victor Emanuel and directed Italian politics was once more revealed. The King's project for despatching Gari-

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baldi at the head of his volunteers to rouse the Dalmatian populations, and create a diversion of the Austrian troops by a march on Vienna, was thwarted by these men, and the General was sent to the Tyrol, where his splendid achievements, bought at the price of such heroic blood, were rendered vain by the order to suspend hostilities received just after the victory of Bezzecca; and if the war ended favourably for the Italians, spite of Custozza and Lissa, this was undoubtedly thanks to the successes won by the Prussian arms. Anyhow, until the peace, concluded in August 1866, united Venetia to the rest of Italy, it was useless to think of taking any active steps for the solution of the Roman problem.

During all these months Costa, in his capacity of secret emissary between the Roman exiles and the National Committee, was frequently travelling between Rome and Florence, engaged on a work of reorganisation and preparation which would have cost him dear had the Papal authorities realised to the full the part he was acting. But again on this occasion his double character of conspirator and artist helped to keep them off the scent. His political occupations were not such as to take him away from his art, and the studio in Via Margutta was far from being merely a centre of political conspiracy.

It was during these years that he formed one of the great friendships of his life, for it was in the winter of 1865–66 that he first met the Earl of Carlisle, then Mr. George Howard, and his young wife, in Rome. Appositely enough, this friendship with the man who was to become his pupil, and, moreover, the chief purchaser of his work, was brought about by a picture.

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Mr. Howard was visiting the chief cities of Italy with his wife, and one day in Florence, walking through the Pitti Gallery, they were struck by the excellence of a copy of a famous picture by Giorgione, known as the "Concerto," and they got into conversation with the artist who was engaged on it, a Venetian, Marcato, inquiring of him how he came to choose this particular work. Marcato was a friend of Costa's, and a great admirer of his art, and it was the Roman who had advised him to copy the "Concerto." Marcato said as much, giving an enthusiastic account of his friend and his art to the English travellers, who expressed a wish to make his acquaintance, and got his Roman address from Marcato. When, towards 1866, Mr. and Mrs. Howard reached Rome, they did not fail to call at Via Margutta, where they found Costa engaged on his big canvas, "La France se renouvelle toujours," the first and also the last work on which Lord Carlisle was to see his friend engaged, for, on the occasion of his last visit to Rome, in 1898, he found Nino still working at the figure. Costa called on his new acquaintance at the Hotel de Rome; and from that time to his death they remained fast friends, knit together by a mutual admiration and by their art. Mr. Howard was so greatly struck by Costa's work that he, himself an artist, wished to study under him; and it was Costa who first induced him to paint in oils, forbidding him in his capacity of master to work in water-colours for some time, as he considered the facility of the medium harmful to young artists.

And here we may note that all who studied under Costa were unanimous in praising his gifts as a teacher. His whole-hearted enthusiasm, his deep sense of the

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dignity of his art, communicated themselves to those who came near him. He did not in the least wish to create a school of servile imitators, he valued and appreciated individuality to the full; but few people had his gift of seizing on the essential points in a picture or a landscape. He perceived the character and beauty of either with that rapidity and refinement of vision given only to the elect few even among artists, and had the faculty of awakening it in other minds less gifted than his own. His long and patient studies had made him a master of technique, and he was always ready to impart his knowledge to those who sought it of him.

The winter of 1866–67 was a memorable and brilliant one in Rome in more ways than one. Spite of the underground movement which was soon to give birth to so important an insurrection, society was quite exceptionally brilliant that season, and Costa saw again many old friends, and got acquainted with many new. Amongst these latter was Mr., now Sir William, Blake Richmond, on whom Costa's art made a deep impression, and who has most kindly favoured me with the following account of his meeting with the Roman painter:—

"I met Giovanni Costa in Rome in the winter of 1866. Our meeting took place in the Caffè Greco one evening. It was winter; Rome was full of visitors. Mr. Gladstone, the Duke of Argyll and his family, Lord Cardwell, and other members of the Government which had recently been defeated on the Reform Bill, were visitors, and society was brilliant as well as intellectual. W. G. Cartwright and Odo Russell were both in the foremost of it all; and Leighton numbered among a most delightful society.

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"I had been dining at the *Lepre*, and, after dinner, I went to the *Greco* for coffee and a game of dominoes. Gibson was dead, but the old Bohemian resort was still well stocked with artists, who, if they were not dandies, were excellent simple fellows, full of good stories and genial *bonhomie;* and Leighton, with his well-known conservatism, stuck to his old haunts of evenings when he was not otherwise engaged.

"He came into the Caffè with a tall dark Roman, whose gleaming eyes, big hooked nose, and curly black hair, struck me in a moment as a presence of remarkable personality. With that promptness and cordiality which characterised him, always anxious to do the kind and generous thing, Leighton came quickly up to me. 'Come,' he said; 'I must introduce you to Giovanni Costa, a real artist, a great artist!' I was taken up to Costa, who, with a kind of graceful bluntness, shook hands, and we began to speak in French—my Italian was not then fluent, and Costa's French was very Roman; however, we made one another's acquaintance, and talked for some time; Leighton leaving us alone.

"This meeting was promptly followed by a visit which I made to Costa's studio in the Via Margutta.

"I was a stripling devoted to art, but naif in my views; or, better stated, ignorant. Leighton had already gained my admiration; I liked his sense of line, I liked the rhythm of his work, and it had struck me that all the pictures I had seen of his were 'new'—not 'new' in the odious modern sense, but new on the old lines. I had loved the work of Millais and Hunt, and I love it still; but in the work of Leighton there was to me something distinguished, more Greek, more decorative.

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"Well, my studio was in the Via San Felice. I walked down to the Piazza di Spagna, then along the Via Margutta, and found my way up many steps to the studio Costa!

"Upon my knocking, the door opened, and there was that genial greeting so rare from a great man to a novice. The studio was garnished with beautiful things, armour, tapestry, and curios. But those were not the objects which attracted me. On various easels were pictures which I shall never forget; they were and are quite unlike any others that I have seen. Big in design, like Greek bas-reliefs; full of a strange atmosphere. They united a system of lines with an appreciation of planes, to my thinking qualities only combined by the greatest masters.

"With that kindness ever his, Costa brought down, from various stages where he kept his studies from nature, a multitude of beautiful works; swift impressions, designs for pictures, and also elaborate drawings from nature which might have been from the hand of Benozzo Gozzoli. It was a new revelation of nature to me—it was broad and simple, yet full of detail.

"A magnificent picture, which now is in possession of Mr. Stopford Brooke, was on the easel—to my thinking one of the noblest landscapes ever painted. Then there was the "Women Stealing Wood at Ardea," now in the gallery of Lord Carlisle. Leighton had told me that I should see a real artist, and that I should find a true friend, and it was so.

"I went back to my studio another man; I had been refreshed by a new stream, and one, too, that flowed direct from Parnassus. Costa's inspiration was so real—not in the

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modern realistic sense, but in the ideal; it had something prehistoric yet modern, large, and manly.

"Amidst an absolutely dead artistic community here was a man seeing nature, not only with the eyes of a poet but as a sculptor. And not only that, for Costa was an artist whose sensibilities might have led him into various paths, but he, a Roman—better still, an Etruscan—was convinced of his own individuality, the hereditary strain of severity was in the very veins of his being.

"Leighton took every one to Costa's studio; and some were much impressed, notably Mr. Gladstone, who was struck by the classical (not sham, but real) enthusiasm and sentiment of the painter.

"It was indeed a pleasure to me to go with Costa into the Roman Campagna, and watch the process of his thought and impression, and his deliberate manner of working them out.

"One day I remember especially. Leighton, Costa, and I went out, or, rather, I met them, at Porta Nomentana. We all began to work. Leighton and I were swift, and we had already made an impression when Costa came and looked at our work. 'Yes,' he said; 'that is admirable, but it is only for once.' I went to see what he had done. He had drawn every contour with care, he had studied every plane, and he had painted in only his values. How far Leighton carried his sketch I know not; I only know that mine hangs now from the walls, an impression, Costa's became a picture."

When we think of the dead level of commercialism which Italian art had reached at this period, and that the few young artists whose work gave hopes for the future were almost entirely unknown abroad, we cannot

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wonder at the delight it must have given Englishmen, who have always felt themselves drawn to Italy by so many ties, to come across a man whose work was of such excellence as Costa's, and one who possessed both as artist and as man the characteristics which go to make a leader. Indeed, it is impossible to over-estimate his influence on the more thoughtful and refined of his artist contemporaries, and no better tribute to this fact can be given than that contained in the concluding words of a letter which Sir William Richmond addressed to me: "This I should like to say—if what I have painted in landscape has any merit, it is largely due to the early influence of Giovanni Costa, or, as we better like to call him, Nino."

A very interesting memorial of this friendship remains to us in the portrait of Costa, which we here reproduce. This work, which was executed during the first three months of their acquaintance, was undertaken by Richmond partly as a study in Costa's own system of work, and was painted on by both the friends. It shows us the artist in his fortieth year. The pale face, with its sallow, olive complexion, stands out against the dark background with all the vivacity and vividness of characterisation of a portrait by some old master. Here we have the strongly marked, noticeable features, the curly black hair and silky beard, and, above all, the large black eyes, so full of life and fire, those eyes with a suggestion of fun and mischief in them, casting that sidelong glance so familiar to the artist's friends, and which gave one the impression that their owner could see all round him, even behind him as it were. This work is perhaps more a study than a finished portrait; but whatever it may lack in finish it

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PLATE XV

PORTRAIT OF COSTA

BY SIR W. RICHMOND

In the possession of Sigra. Costa

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more than makes up for in life and vigour. The characterisation is so strong that it almost partakes of caricature; but no one could wish for a better portrait, one finer in colour or expression. This work now belongs to the artist's widow, Signora Antonia Costa, a precious memory of Nino as she first knew him.

Portrait painting, the form of art which, after landscape, most attracted Costa, had a strong hold on him at this time; and it was at this date that he painted perhaps his finest portrait, that of his little grand-niece, Attilia Narducci. Costa was a constant frequenter of the house of Signora Narducci, the mother of Attilia (a daughter of his sister Anna). This lady, along with her husband, was an ardent and active patriot, helping in the revolutionary movement, and concealing the conspirators in her house. It was with her that the brothers Enrico and Giovanni Cairoli stayed when hiding about this time in Rome, and to her hospitable roof did Costa himself retire when, a little later on, his position became untenable.

Thus between friends, work, and politics, the months went by, and the beginning of 1867 found the vexed Roman question in a very advanced and difficult stage. So far Costa's position, though fraught with danger (for, had the police got a clear idea of his mission in the city, he might at any moment have been imprisoned or even worse), had not compelled him to conceal his presence. He was an artist, and as such he lived, frequenting largely the English colony, working in his studio or sketching in the Campagna, all the time keeping up an active correspondence with the exiles and Revolutionists; but of this the authorities, though they may have had their suspicions, had no proofs.

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But, with the progress of events, his patriotic duties absorbed Costa more and more.

Dissatisfaction had become acute and general throughout Italy. The incapacity shown in the conduct of the campaign of 1866, the financial crisis through which the country was passing, the intriguing and unsatisfactory conduct of the Government, were causes which had succeeded in disgusting and disheartening all classes in the country. The clerical party, headed by Cardinal Antonelli (the real director of affairs in the Vatican), clamoured against every attack on its privileges, and on the abuses which it had hitherto been able to practise undisturbed; and called loudly on the French Emperor to champion its cause and man the Papal territory. Mazzini, disgusted with the Convention of September, and with the unheroic attitude of the Government, preached insurrection openly, and called on the people to throw off the monarchy. Aspromonte had not taught Garibaldi to forget Rome, and *Roma o Morte* was his avowed motto, and one which was accepted by most Italians. The King, too, was sincerely desirous of seeing the tricolour fluttering above the Capitol, but he was tied by the Convention of September; and the men of the Florentine *Consorteria*, by whom he was surrounded, had Rome on their lips, but not in their hearts. An insurrection of the Romans within Rome offered the only possible means, given the political situation, for the Italians to enter the Papal city, and this was just what the Government, by means of its effete instrument, the National Committee, was anxious to avoid.

Of this fact Costa grew ever more certain. Baron Ricasoli had been called on to form the ministry when

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Lamarmora, in his capacity of General, was summoned to the field on the declaration of war in June 1866. This meant the complete triumph for the time being of the Moderates and the *Consorteria*, which was at this time subsidising the National Committee, the Committee of Inaction, to the tune of 10,000 lire a month.

Meanwhile Garibaldi was journeying through the cities of Italy, everywhere preaching the necessity of freeing Rome, and volunteers were gathering round him, ready to move at the first word from the General. Mazzini was agitating, stirring up the *Comitato d'Azione*, collecting funds, and prepared at the first sign of insurrection to enter the country.

But for all this agitation to come to anything, Rome had to give the signal. Costa at once set to work, with a few other Revolutionists, and by March 1867 they had created the Centre of Insurrection, which absorbed in its ranks the greater part of the members of the old committee, and which became the moving spirit in the insurrectionary movement, working side by side with the Mazzinian Committee of Action, which continued isolated in its rigid republicanism, and in unison with the *Centro d'Emigrazione*, which had been founded in Florence, and in which Crispi took a leading part.

The new Centre of Insurrection was subsidised entirely by voluntary subscriptions, many of its members contributing very large sums each month. Costa himself during these months gave away the best part of his patrimony, subscribing to the Insurrectionary Centre as much as 3000 lire a month. The calls on the revolutionary funds were very numerous: arms had to be provided, comrades and exiles helped, an extensive clandestine correspondence

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kept up, as well as a widespread secret information service—one of the most expensive and necessary items, as all connected with similar revolutionary movements know. Besides this, as the months went by and affairs neared a crisis, money had to be found to enable Garibaldi to get up an expedition which was to co-operate from the outside with the revolutionary movement within the city, and enter Rome, when the Roman patriots, risen in insurrection, should open its gates.

All this work of Costa's insured him, of course, the deadly hatred of the old leaders of the National Committee, and of the party which directed their policy from Florence. To really bring about an insurrection which might bring things to such a crisis as to render inevitable the intervention and participation of the Italian Government was the last thing in the world which the all-powerful Florentine *Consorteria* wished for. Moreover, it was known that Costa had exercised all his influence to get the Government subsidy, which he knew to be worse than wasted, stopped, an object in which he succeeded after the fall of Ricasoli, and when Rattazzi had come to power. So bitter was the feeling against the artist-patriot that, in a secret meeting of the old National Committee, it was decided to suppress him by assassination, and thus during all this time he was in double and constant danger. The Papal Government was searching for him high and low, compelling him to change domicile no fewer than forty-seven times in a few weeks. Fortunately the Papal police does not seem to have been particularly well organised or sharp-witted, and doubtless the Revolutionists had their men in its files, and for some time he succeeded in keeping them off by simply taking

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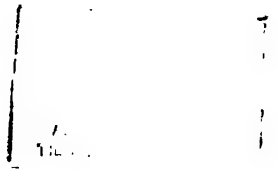

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PLATE XVI

PORTRAIT OF ATTILIA NARDUCCI

In the possession of Sigra. Sernicoli

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a studio on the floor above his own in the Via Margutta. The police were watching his original studio, and searching for him in all sorts of other places where they thought he might be found, but it never occurred to them to look in the room above. Moreover, his double capacity of artist and conspirator still continued to somewhat mystify the authorities.

Anyhow, when his position had really become dangerous, a terrible illness came to his rescue. He was struck down by a very severe attack of rheumatic fever, and for three months he lay between life and death, concealed in the house of his niece, Signora Narducci, where he was again treated by the homœopathist, Dr. Ladelci. Soon after his recovery from this illness, which, however, left traces in his constitution conducive to the disease to which he finally succumbed, he met a friend of his, a certain Morelli, who, though ignoring his recent illness, expressed great surprise at seeing him alive. He had ascribed his disappearance from public life to the work of his political opponents. When Costa explained the real reason of his enforced retreat, his friend joyfully exclaimed: "Well, you can thank your lucky star for that rheumatic fever; it has saved your life!" *Non tutto il male viene per nuocere*, as the Italians say.

In April 1867 the Ricasoli ministry fell, and Rattazzi, the man of Aspromonte, was again called to office. And now the fatal series of intrigues which led to the disasters of Villa Glori and Mentana were set on foot.

Rome, given the political situation, could not be freed by any means other than an insurrectionary movement proceeding from the city itself; and this Mazzini himself was the first to recognise. Whilst Ricasoli was still in

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power, he had written: "Rome must not be annexed to Florence; we must annex ourselves to Rome; but, in order for this to be possible, Rome must become once more what she was in 1849." And when, a few months later on, he saw the bands of Garibaldian volunteers gathering on the Papal frontiers, and realised the popular desire to march on Rome—a desire fomented for its own ends by a certain section of the Government—he wrote: "You will not thus go to Rome, but to a second Aspromonte. Foment, organise a movement within Rome. . . . A movement in the provinces would be a gross error, it would only put the Papal authorities on their guard." The *Consorteria*, however, saw in a movement on the part of Garibaldi and his followers the best means of quieting popular effervescence, whilst certain that the terms of the September Convention, and, in the last resort, French intervention, would frustrate such a movement; and so Garibaldi, though arrested and imprisoned in Caprera to save appearances, was encouraged to persevere in his plans and given to understand that the Italian troops would not interfere with him. Indeed Rattazzi's plan was to secretly help the movement in the Roman Campagna, so that it might afford him an excuse to intervene, under pretext of repressing the revolutionary movement.

But on this occasion the crafty minister outdid himself. The support he gave the invading party was too obvious; and, moreover, the Convention of September 1864 compelled him to prevent any invasion of the Papal territory before having recourse to intervention. Rattazzi, and Garibaldi too, on this occasion, were deficient in political acumen. By the terms of the convention the only chance for Rome was for the Romans themselves to rise in insur-

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rection. Therefore the only long-headed policy would have been to stock Rome secretly with arms in preparation of an insurrectionary movement. The *Consorteria* and the National Committee were averse to this; the latter body petitioned Garibaldi to invade the Papal States as soon as possible, declaring that this was the one signal needed for the Romans to rise; whereas, in reality, by so doing the chances of success for the Revolutionists within Rome were greatly compromised.

The first step necessary for the plans of the *Consorteria* was to get the new Centre of Insurrection as much into its own hands as possible, and for this purpose its agents in Rome set to work to resuscitate the National Committee, one of whose most influential members at this time was a certain Antonio de Dominicis, a lawyer attached to the French Embassy, who undertook to forward the correspondence between the Revolutionists and the committees in the different Italian cities, more especially the Centre of Emigration in Florence, by means of his connection with the French Embassy. The result of the negotiations between the various bodies in Rome was that, in July 1867, the National Committee, the Centre of Insurrection, and, after much hesitation, the Mazzinian Committee of Action, all united to form the *Giunta Nazionale Romana*, which was to prepare and organise the insurrection on which so much depended.

This reunion was much disapproved of by many of the members of the Centre of Insurrection, amongst whom was Costa, who had no confidence in the sincerity of its members nor in De Dominicis. But Garibaldi was always anxious for concordant action in the revolutionary camp; and his agent, Colonel Francesco Cucchi, whom he

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had sent to Rome, where he daily risked his life in the cause he had at heart, and who, in Costa's words, was a real hero, though lacking somewhat in the discretion and foresight of a statesman, was strongly in favour of union, and refused to listen to what he considered the scandal-mongering of the revolutionary party.

The *Giunta Nazionale Romana* used to hold its secret meetings in a room in the Piazza di Spagna, behind the bookseller Spithoever, and in the house of a Signora Petrarca in Via Acquasparta, near Piazza Navona. Cucchi was placed at the head of the revolutionary movement. Along with him were actively working Costa, Giuseppe Guerzoni, Giulio Silvestri, Ansigliani, Giuseppe Rossi, Perfetti, Giulio Aiani, and Giuseppe Piatti. The brothers Enrico and Giovanni Cairoli came to Rome, hiding in the house of Costa's niece, Signora Narducci, then living in the Via San Bastianello, and meeting with Nino and others in the little backroom adjoining the studio in the Via Margutta, which had a window looking on to the courtyard, by which the conspirators could have escaped in case of a visit from the police.

One of the principal objects of these meetings was to arrange for the introduction of arms into the city, of which the Revolutionists were greatly in need, as the National Committee, in several years' time, had only succeeded in getting together about a hundred halberds, of no practical use except for theatrical performances; and they only had a few old rifles, and insufficient quantities of powder, dynamite, and Orsini bombs.

Many were the devices resorted to in order to introduce these arms and ammunition into the city, and many the more or less humorous and perilous situations to which

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they gave rise. In this instance, as in so many others, English sympathisers were active in their help. The English consul then was Joseph Severn, the artist, who had assisted Keats in his last illness, and who now rests near his immortal friend in the beautiful Protestant cemetery at Rome. Though of course his position prevented him from taking an active part in Italian politics, still Severn's sympathies were all with the Liberals, and anything he could do to help individuals he did; whilst Odo Russell, attached to the consulate, lent still more active help, allowing cases of arms to be addressed to him, one of which, on the eve of the insurrection, fell into the hands of the Papal authorities. Perhaps the most important consignment of arms was one of over one thousand rifles which Garibaldi despatched from Follonica, and which came up the Tiber on a boat. However, a large number had disappeared before they reached their destination, having been thrown into the river by traitors in the revolutionary camp. The boat, with the hundred and eighty rifles which remained of the cargo, was moored near St. Paul's, outside the Gate, and Costa, with a party of friends, had to see to landing them. For this purpose they set out one dark night, and succeeded in conveying the arms to a cave in the neighbourhood of the Porta San Sebastiano, which leads to the Via Appia. The authorities had, however, as usual, been well informed of the proceedings of the *Giunta*, and had placed a cordon of gendarmes to catch the conspirators on their return to the city. But the "Gun runners" were on the look-out, and realising this danger, they separated. Costa eventually dropped across one of the sentries, set to catch the Revolutionists, in a dark lane. The soldier challenged

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him, and Costa answered by pointing a pistol at him with one hand, and offering him a napoleon (twenty francs) with the other, inviting the man to choose between the two. The laconic answer came, accompanied by the expressive shrug of the Southerner, "*Da mi il napoleone. Sono stato brigante anch'io.*" ("Give me the napoleon. I have been a brigand myself.") A truly charming picture this gives of the Pontifical police, and of the strange *quid pro quos* in which a patriot may fall!

But spite of the unarmed and unprepared condition of the patriots in Rome, Rattazzi and the Centre of Emigration in Florence were loud in their advice to the *Giunta* to hurry on the insurrection. "Fire but one shot, one single shot," was the cry raised by the Centre of Emigration. The *Roman Committee of Insurrection*, as the revolutionary organisation was called after the arrest of Garibaldi in September (an event which had so alarmed the Moderate element in the *Giunta* that it had suddenly withdrawn), had meantime prepared a plan of insurrection, according to which the revolt was timed for 1 A.M. on the 22nd October.

The gas tubes were to have been cut, and the city plunged in darkness; the Serristori Barracks had been undermined, and Giuseppe Monti, a stone-mason, had undertaken to set fire to the mine which was to blow them up; the military hospital was to be attacked by a small band, and the arms therein seized by the insurgents. Giuseppe Guerzoni, at the head of 400 men, was to fetch the arms hidden at the Villa Matteini, outside Porta San Paolo, and, on his return, distribute them to Cucchi's men, who were to be in the neighbourhood of the Forum, and who were to seize the Capitol, guarded as a rule only by

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a small patrol, whereupon, entering the tower, they were to have tolled the great bell, calling on the citizens to rise. The Cairoli brothers were to have come down the Tiber with a cargo of rifles, landing at the Port of Ripetta, and, along with the insurgents, they were to have attacked the ministry of war. This insurrection would have been the signal for Garibaldi and his troops to enter the city, opened to them from within by the Romans themselves; and when all was done the Italian troops could have come on the scene, and arranged matters finally with the Pope and the European Powers.

The plan was daring, especially if we consider the great lack of arms; but the Florentine Centre of Emigration clamoured for action, Rattazzi had given the Revolutionists to understand that the Italian Government would not be actively hostile, and that he, indeed, favoured the plan; Garibaldi and the more ardent spirits were burning to act; the Moderates, in the hope that an immature movement might prove fatal to the Italian solution of the Roman question, encouraged the design.

But whatever the chances of success of such an insurrection may have been, treachery proved fatal to the whole business.

It was only too true that all along the Vatican had been most accurately informed of the doings of the revolutionary party. But whatever might be suspected, no certainty was enjoyed as to the source whence this information came. When the plan of insurrection was complete, Francesco Cucchi (I now relate the circumstances exactly as they were told to me by Costa), against Costa's will and spite of his protests, insisted on communicating it to Antonio de Dominicis, whom I have

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mentioned as being one of the heads of the old National Roman Committee. This gentleman, curiously enough, *forgot* this all-important document on a table in the room of the French Embassy, to which he was attached in the capacity of lawyer. The French Ambassador, M. Armand, *by chance*, came across this document, and, perceiving its import, hastened to consign it to Cardinal Antonelli, all powerful in Rome, so that when the insurrection broke out, everything had been foreseen and forestalled. This most important fact for a right understanding of the complicated events of this period has never, so far, been known, and it was related, years after the events, to Giovanni Costa by M. Bouvet, recorder to the French Embassy at that period.

On the 15th October Garibaldi reached Florence, having escaped in a sailing-boat from Caprera, where he had been confined, and where he was guarded by Italian warships. This event lent strength to the pressure put by the French Government on the Italian for the immediate disavowal and active repression of the national movement on Rome. French intervention was threatened. French troops were ready to set sail at a moment's notice from Toulon. The moment had come for the Italian Government to take up a decided attitude; either it must face the danger of a French war and place itself at the head of the revolutionary movement, or once more eat humble pie to Louis Napoleon and act policeman to the Pope. All was confusion and terror in Florence. The King, by nature inclined to energetic measures, was worked upon by the *Consorteria*, with whom his son, Humbert, sided on this occasion. Rattazzi had gone too far to retire; he did not feel up to assuming the responsibility

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of a second Aspromonte, and, Pontius Pilate like, he washed his hands of the matter, and resigned. Menabrea, his successor, hesitated some days before accepting office. During this interregnum Garibaldi boldly proceeded on his way.

On the 22nd October, as arranged, the revolutionary movement broke out in Rome. From Costa's studio in the Via Margutta forty young men, who had been concealed there all day, left in the evening to seize the arms stored in the military hospital of Santo Spirito. The painter himself was at his post to take part in the attack on the Capitol, which, it was thought, would as usual be defended only by a handful of soldiers, who were as a rule at that hour, towards 2 or 3 A.M., very sleepy and much given to yawning. But the Papal authorities, informed, as we have seen, of the whole plot, had concealed their troops in the cellars of the Senatorial Palace, and when the insurgents, wretchedly armed with a few old guns and some Orsini bombs (for the arms which their comrades were to have brought from the Villa Matteini never turned up: that part of the plan of insurrection had likewise been frustrated by the Government), advanced to the assault, these troops rushed out, and stationing themselves at the top of the flight of stairs which leads to the Capitol, at the head of which stand the colossal statues of Castor and Pollux, they fired into the Piazza Aracœli below.

Costa, as so often happens in all important moments, was impressed by a small incident which came under his notice in that hour of danger, and the humorous, if grim, incongruity of which struck him forcibly. At the first volley fired by the troops two men fell—one a carabineer

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of the Pope, who was passing by, and who died with the refrain of a then popular song, "*Addio mia bella, addio,*" on his lips; and an insurgent, who fell exclaiming, "*Madonna Santa*" (Holy Virgin).

In a letter written on the very day of these events to his friend, Frederick Leighton, we find the characteristic sentence: "*Oggi ci siamo battuti sul Campidoglio; dopo pranzammo da Bedeau.*" (This morning we fought on the Capitol; afterwards we dined at Bedeau's.) Bedeau was a well-known restaurant-keeper of the period, keeping shop in the Via della Croce, off the Corso.

This little sentence gives the whole character of the man. Ever ready for any deed of heroism or daring on his country's behalf, yet treating it all as a matter of course. So strong a characteristic was this of his, that though in his latter years he would willingly talk about these times, and would go into long accounts of the rights and wrongs of the case, remembering facts and circumstances with remarkable lucidity, nothing was more difficult than to get him to relate his own share in these events in which he played so important a part. He would talk of himself in so far as he was implicated in the events; he would relate with much pith and point anecdotes of people he had known, curious or humorous incidents or situations; but never did he go into tales of his own deeds of prowess. This is so true of him, that though, as I have shown, his personal share in the troublous history of that time was most important, it is hardly at all known. His name is never mentioned in accounts which give prominence to very secondary figures. Only if one questions the few survivors who had a part in

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these events, only if one turns over the unpublished and unknown correspondence of that date, does one realise how large a share he played in the events. Never was a man less inclined than Costa to flaunt his claims to his country's gratitude.

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CHAPTER VIII

MENTANA

THE revolutionary movement was a failure all along the line.

The Cairoli brothers never managed to reach Ripetta, but fell fighting at Villa Glori. Costa, when all was over and he once more found himself in Florence, met there again Giovanni Cairoli, still suffering from the wounds received, of which he was to die; still wearing the clothes he had donned that fatal day, and which were stained with his brother's blood.

Whilst touching on this incident, one of the most heroic and pathetic of the whole Italian martyrology, I think that the following letter, hitherto unpublished, and which has been most kindly communicated to me by the Hon. Giovanni Cadolini, to whom it was addressed, cannot fail to interest the reader. In it Giovanni Cairoli, then a prisoner in the hospital in Rome, relates the sad events of the 23rd October 1867, to his friend:—

[*Translation.*]

"ROME, *25th October* 1867.

"EXCELLENT FRIEND,—I write to you from the hospital, where I am now a prisoner, and wounded—not, however, seriously. This is news which will certainly grieve you, excellent friend; but there is yet other, immeasurably worse—our Enrico is dead. Oh, I cannot even now believe in so great a misfortune! Yet

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who better than I should be persuaded of its truth? —than I, to whom fell the dear and painful duty of closing the eyes of our beloved one?—than I, who despaired at my incapacity to give him the help he needed owing to my own condition? The encounter took place on a hill, situated about two miles from Rome, where we had taken up our position for some hours. I and our poor Enrico fell together, I may say locked in an embrace. I was wounded in the head; he in the chest, near the right shoulder, and in the face. Thus embraced, amidst the agony caused by our wounds, we thought together of our poor mother, of our dear Benedetto, of the grief you all, precious friends, would feel on receiving the sad news. Shortly after Enrico expired; whilst the only help which I could give him, and that with great difficulty, was my arm on which to rest his head. His last thoughts were for the little mother, and for you, his brothers and friends. He expressed the desire to be buried at Groppello, in the family grave. Shortly afterwards I, too, thought I should die; the abundant hæmorrhage from my wounds, added to my grief for the terrible loss, produced such weakness that I thought that breath would leave me from one minute to another. After half-an-hour, the thought of the little mother, and of you all, gave me the courage to make a supreme effort to rise; I staggered to my feet and tottered along. Thus I managed at last to reach a house where I found something to bandage myself with, and a more suitable spot to rest in.

"But in order to hand on the pen to other friends who also wish to write to their unhappy families, I will conclude by saying that we are seven, all together in the same room, and well treated. Here are the names of

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the other six—Castagnini, Moruzzi, Bassini of Pavia, Papezzoni of Mirandola, Ferrari and Coloredo of Molina. In the fortress of St. Angelo are imprisoned four others of our band, who stayed with the wounded with the merciful object of helping them; they are Fiorini, Colombi, Campari.

"Besides our beloved Enrico, we have to weep the loss of the excellent young barrister, Mantovani of Padua. Poor city! I have lost no occasion to insist and beg that they may be placed in separate spots; and that I might be allowed to provide a zinc coffin for my brother, in which he might be removed. Think of my dolorous impatience at being confined here, unable to attend at once to a matter which I have so at heart. It would be well for a friend to come to Rome, one whose presence they could not object to, in order that he might attend to all this. If this is not possible, a little money should be forwarded to me, as I have been left with very little after that most disastrous encounter. I beg you to see that the sad news be broken as gently as possible to dearest Benedetto and to my little mother. For this reason I write to you. I am already much better. I am able to get up, and, indeed, to walk.—I embrace you, GIOVANNINO CAIROLI."

Some years later, on his return to Rome after 1870, Costa began a picture of the Monte Parioli, and the stretch of the Tiber which flows at its feet, where these events occurred, seen from the other side of the river. The sun is setting behind the distant Alban mountains, and the whole scene is bathed in an atmosphere of suffused gold, like an aureole of glory hanging over the

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spot, so silent and so melancholy, where such heroic blood was shed for Italy. Costa wished to present this memento to the noble mother of the Cairoli, Donna Adelaide; but death, which came to her in March 1871, closed her sad, loving eyes before the small but exquisite panel was finished, and it remained in the artist's studio.

But to return to Rome. Monti and Tognetti had blown up the Serristori Barracks as arranged, but to small purpose, and they had been arrested on the spot.

The last hopes of the insurgents vanished with the massacre in the house of Giulio Ajani in Trastevere, where large quantities of arms and ammunition had been stored for a final effort. And Costa, seeing that he could do nothing further, and that his position, hiding in Rome in the house of Signora Narducci, was becoming every day more dangerous and untenable, his life threatened both by the Papal authorities and by his enemies of the old National Committee, once more powerful with the triumph of the *Consorteria* in Florence, decided to leave Rome.

It was then that Costa, for the first time in his life, got himself up in the complete attire of a fashionable dandy. He donned the high beaver hat, dear to respectability; a very fashionably cut overcoat; armed himself with a double-barrelled pistol; and in a handsome calèche, with springs *à la Polignac*, liveried servants, and a wife and child in the persons of his niece and her little girl, Attilia, he left Rome in fine style on the 1st November 1867, departing by the Porta del Popolo.

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He had counted on the respect with which apparent riches and fine clothes inspire the powers that be, nor had he reckoned without his host. His handsome turn-out was allowed to pass through the gate triumphantly, without being even challenged by the sentries who stood guard.

Our artist's intention was to join Garibaldi, and share with him the dangers of a last desperate attempt to free Rome from without. About fifteen miles from the city a boat was in waiting, and Nino, wishing good-bye to his niece, who had so courageously and efficaciously helped him and his friends, left her to return home, and himself crossed the Tiber in search of Garibaldi, whom he knew to be near, though the exact whereabouts of the General were unknown to him.

After wandering about some time, he at last found a peasant, of whom he made some inquiries. "The Garibaldini were here yesterday," replied the man, and pointing to a litter of fowls' feathers, he advised Costa to follow in the feathery track of that domestic bird, "for," as he explained, "where Garibaldi and his men have passed, not a fowl remains alive." Costa was struck with the strength of this deduction, and sure enough the clue led him straight to Monte Rotondo, where the General and his men were encamped.

Whilst making his way to Monte Rotondo, Costa had caught sight of the outposts of the French and Papal Zouaves, and the information he had gathered led him to believe that Garibaldi and his 5000 volunteers would be attacked on the following day. He was anxious to warn the General of the danger, and to advise him to take up a stronger position.

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As soon as he reached Monte Rotondo he proceeded at once to the house of a certain Salvatori, where he found Garibaldi's staff, amongst whom Guerzoni and Bertani, gathered round a table on which was spread out a scanty repast. Costa, arriving thus unexpectedly, was greeted with loud acclamations, and at once invited to partake of the meal. "Thanks," he replied; "but just see what I have got here with me in the bag," and he drew forth from a haversack, to the astonished delight of all present, a splendid joint of roast veal. This substantial addition to the scanty provisions was hailed with acclamation. "But it is you, then, who invite us to share your meal," exclaimed his hungry comrades. The veal was set on the table, and all turned to with a will.

Whilst eating, Costa and his companions exchanged news, and he informed them that from the information he had gathered on his way there, he felt certain that they would be attacked on the following day by the French Zouaves, who had entered Rome on the 30th October, under General de Failly, and by the Papal troops. This news was of course received with the greatest interest, and Costa was advised to proceed without further delay to the Palazzo di Piombino, where Garibaldi was lodging. He was told that he would find him at supper, after which he was in the habit of retiring immediately to bed.

The General welcomed Costa most cordially, and, mindful of the fact that the Roman painter had enjoyed that honour in 1849, he exclaimed, "Bravo, Costa! You belong, of course, to my staff."

Costa warned Garibaldi of the danger he foresaw of

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an attack on the morrow by the allied troops of Louis Napoleon and the Pope. The General replied that on the morrow (3rd Nov.) he and his troops would leave Monte Rotondo for Tivoli, where they were to join the volunteers under Nicotera, and he charged Costa to precede them thither, so as to prepare quarters for the troops.

In Costa's opinion it was already too late for such an undertaking. He foresaw that the expedition would be cut up by the enemy, and urged the expediency of abandoning all idea of marching towards Rome, proposing instead that they should leave Monte Rotondo early next morning, take to the mountains, assemble there the volunteers, and raise the standard of revolution in Italy.

Garibaldi, however, was doubtful. Those who knew him say that never did he appear more preoccupied, never did he look older, more worn, than during this expedition. He did not feel as certain of his men as he had done when he went from victory to victory, from Calatafimi to Volturno, in 1860; nor as when he had headed the courageous band which nearly won Istria for Italy in 1866. The *Consorteria*, anxious to ruin the expedition which they could not prevent, had recruited on his behalf a lot of scum from amongst the lowest strata of the population of Tuscany, and these men did their best to discredit the expedition by acts of insubordination and pillage. Desertions were common. Undoubtedly he had at his orders a handful of heroes, who were to give proof of their prowess at Mentana; but they were for the most part inexperienced, undisciplined, and unprovided for. Ragged and shoeless,

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lacking the means to resist the inclemencies of the advancing winter; ill-armed, ill-fed. The Italian Government had abandoned him; he would have to fight the French and the Pope, and perhaps even the Italian troops. Still, he was determined not to recede. Italy, he knew, would never arise except from the blood of her martyrs, and he, and the few elect who surrounded him, were ready once more to risk the supreme sacrifice.

To Costa's suggestion he replied: "I am older than you are. We will do as I think best. Besides, my men lack everything. They are not even shod; I must see to distributing them shoes."

Costa then turned to Colonel Menotti, Garibaldi's son, calling on him to second his proposal; but the General was not to be moved, though his son was willing enough to approve of Costa's project.

At last it was settled that the troops should start marching by eleven the following morning, and that Costa, along with a man belonging to the company of the Genoese Carabineers, should precede them in a carriage and prepare the quarters at Tivoli. On bidding Nino good-night the General said: "Come round at dawn to-morrow to the tower of the Palazzo of Monte Rotondo. You know the Campagna well; you will be able to explain to me certain positions."

Costa passed the night in the house of Salvatore, and on the morrow, by times, he was on the tower, where he found Garibaldi already awaiting him.

The wide, undulating expanse of the Campagna lay stretched at their feet. A sullen grey reach of clouds veiled the sky, lit up at the horizon by a bright streak of sunlight; and two Roman *butteri*, with their arms

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folded, wearing their heavy cloaks and characteristic conical black felt hats, were leaning up against the parapet of the tower. In their dignified immobility they looked like two bronze statues. Garibaldi was walking up and down, impatient and excited. Suddenly, folding his arms, he stopped before the two statuesque figures. "And you, there, with those long beards," he began, interpellating the astonished peasants; "you look so like your ancestors. Do you know who they were?" "Please, sir, no," replied the men apologetically. "They conquered the world and gave it laws," continued the General. "Yes, sir; yes," came the reply. "Just see what the priests have made of you! Come along with us, and we shall conquer!" "*Come vuole Vossignoria!*" ("As your worship wishes,") answered the two in chorus. Garibaldi then, turning, perceived Costa, who had silently witnessed this scene with the artist's eye, on which no detail is lost, and he proceeded to get from him the information he required. Suddenly, whilst they were talking, they saw the figure of Don Ignazio, Prince of Piombino, appear above the winding stairs which led to the tower. He was the owner of the Palazzo Piombino, where they were quartered, and belonged to Garibaldi's corps. A fine young man, resplendent in a magnificent red shirt, gorgeous with gold braidings and embroideries. The stairs, however, were very dirty, and Garibaldi, suddenly turning on Don Ignazio, exclaimed: "Prince, your stairs are malodorous; take a broom and sweep them," and the astonished nobleman disappeared to execute the General's command.

On descending from the tower Nino found a carriage awaiting him, drawn by a fine pair of black horses, the late property of some cardinal; the Genoese Carabineer

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was also there. But this man informed him that he could not leave till he had had something to eat, as he had not touched food since the previous day. Costa sent him off to Salvatore's to forage for food, and at last, after a delay which seemed unpardonably long to the impatient Roman, the man returned, grumbling out an excuse to the effect that he had only been able to find an old bone to gnaw—a relic, presumably, of the veal of the previous evening's banquet.

At last they got under way, and caught up the volunteers who had already started on their march towards Tivoli. They were tramping along, the shoes which had been distributed to them that very morning slung across their shoulders, for they had been so long deprived of such luxuries that they had become accustomed to walking bare-footed. Their rations of bread were stuck on the points of their bayonets. Perceiving Costa in his roomy carriage, all those who had baggage or bundles begged him to take it with him, with the result that in a trice the vehicle became a perfect pyramid in shape.

When Costa reached the Villa Santucci, just beyond Mentana, where Captain Carlo Meyer and a handful of Leghorn Carabineers had been stationed, he found that the Papal Zouaves and the French troops had already arrived, and leaving the carriage with its heaped-up contents (on which he never again set eyes), he was present at the first assault made on the villa, which was gallantly defended by the Carabineers, and then, on Meyer's advice, he hurried off to warn Garibaldi, who was just entering Mentana, of the presence of the enemy.

The unequal battle at first began disastrously for the

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patriots; but Garibaldi made good use of the two pieces of artillery which he had captured at Monte Rotondo, and soon the volunteers rallied, and made a splendid bayonet charge, in which Costa took part. The difficulties of the attack were increased by the nature of the ground, a ploughed field, through which the Garibaldini had to charge; and the dead and wounded fell thickly all around. The battle raged fiercest round a spot on the hillside, at the top of which rises Mentana, where some hay-ricks were hotly contended, and where to-day stands the monument to those who fell during the fight.

The day seemed nearly won by Garibaldi. The volunteers were pursuing the Papal troops right into the Villa Santucci, where they had rallied, when suddenly a new and unfamiliar rattle of musketry struck the ear of the assailants.

The French troops, fresh, and armed with the new *Chassepots* rifles, came forward, and before their deadly fire the volunteers fell, mowed down like grass. The *Chassepots* rifles *firent des merveilles*, as the French General telegraphed later on to his imperial master.

Panic spread amongst the undisciplined, unruly section of the volunteers, who already, at the beginning of the fight, had endangered the success of Garibaldi. They fled like sheep, shouting "To the frontier! to the frontier!" (the frontier between the Italian and the Papal territory was only some two miles off).

Costa was beside Garibaldi, who, on horseback on the hillside, watched this shameful scamper. Turning to Costa, he said: "I have seen men run at Bezzecca" (the battle in the Tyrol in 1866), "but never anything like this." Then turning towards the fugitives, pale, hoarse, his eyes

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aflame with anger, he shouted: "*Vil peccoreccio, mettetevi a sedere e vincerete.*" (Cowardly sheep, sit down and you will conquer.)

However, the heroism of the few was such that, charging with their bayonets, they kept back the advancing enemy, and in the evening Mentana was still in the hands of Garibaldi; and the enemy, ignoring the conditions of the volunteers, and fancying that their forces must have been far superior to what they really were, sent to Rome for reinforcements.

But the position of the Garibaldini was quite untenable, and during the night the General, with the major part of his forces, marched to the frontier.

Never had Garibaldi been seen so sombre. He headed the retreat on horseback, silent, preoccupied, his hat pulled far over his eyes.

At Passo Corese, the Italian frontier, the band slept on the bare ground; and in the morning, having deposed their arms, they disbanded, and the General with his staff, amongst which was Costa, set off in a small train composed of two carriages and the engine, bound for Florence. At every station the train was surrounded by crowds, come out to honour and applaud the General; but the display of Italian troops all along the line was also noticeable, looking almost a menace and an insult to the national hero.

At Figline the train came to a stop, surrounded by a detachment of Bersaglieri, and Colonel Camozzi informed the General that he was under arrest.

Costa and those in the same carriage with Garibaldi, amongst whom was Crispi (who had been sent by the Centre of Emigration in Florence to induce Garibaldi to abandon

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all further action, and who had met him at Passo Corese), seized their arms, determined to defend their leader. But Garibaldi stopped them, forbidding them to shed Italian blood. The General, however, refused to recognise his arrest, declaring it to be illegal; he had fought on alien soil, and had ordered his followers to depose their arms at the Italian frontier. Crispi, too, did all in his power to prevent the execution of the unjust mandate, proving that it was illegal, and prolonging the discussion till past two in the morning. But all was in vain; and Garibaldi, who refused to move from the station, was carried off by the Carabinieri, and placed in the carriage reserved for him.

An account of these events, signed by Costa and by the others present, was sent by them to the *Riforma*, where it was printed on the 6th November 1867.

Thus ended the insurrection in Rome and the campaign of Mentana. A defeat, but one which made it impossible that any other but the Italian solution of the Roman question should be final. The blood shed at Mentana sealed the death sentence of the temporal power of the Popes.

Nothing remained to Costa but to return to his art, and he proceeded to Florence, where he arrived in the elegant attire in which he had escaped from Rome and fought at Mentana. We reproduce a little photograph taken of him, just after his arrival, in the clothes he had worn during those eventful days.

Costa was now an outcast from his native city; and in the impossibility of seizing on his person, the Papal Government decided to seize on his studio with all its contents, and on his money, then deposited in various Roman banks.

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PLATE XVII

GIOVANNI COSTA

IN THE CLOTHES IN WHICH HE FOUGHT AT MENTANA, 1867

From a photograph

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To avert this disaster his English friends came to the fore, and we will tell the tale in Sir William Richmond's own words, as he kindly communicated the facts to me:—

"The Sacred College and the police of the Roman Government kept their eye on Costa. Knowing that he was safe in Florence, it was decided that his studio and all its contents, the collection of beautiful artistic bric-a-brac, and the result of years of labour, was to be seized. His money also, invested in Roman banks, was to be confiscated—at least what remained of it, for his generosity during all the revolutionary movement had been phenomenal.

"These intentions were, however, cleverly frustrated, and in the following way.

"There was an American painter, Wilde, then staying in the city, a devoted friend of Costa's. He had got wind of the intentions of the Government, and he came straight off to me. 'So and so is going to happen,' he said, 'what can be done?' It at once struck me that the English Consul could be appealed to. In the studio were many pictures the property of Englishmen, some finished, others incomplete. Joseph Severn, the Consul, was himself a painter, and, though intimate with the Vatican, his sympathies were all for liberty.

"The injustice and harshness of the Government towards one of its distinguished sons was laid by us before Severn, who, after some consideration, consented, on my undertaking to assume all the responsibility for the proceeding, to seal up the door of the studio at No. 33 Via Margutta with England's seal, and to appropriate *pro tem.* the property. This saved the situation. And

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when, three years later, Costa returned to Rome, in September 1870, he found his studio and its contents *in statu quo.*

"The money difficulty was solved by the American artist, Wilde, who cleverly managed to transfer the funds from Rome to Florence, where Costa found refuge after the war."

Of course the attempt at insurrection was followed in Rome by the usual persecutions, imprisonments, and executions to which the Papal Government had accustomed the unhappy city.

Monti and Tognetti, arrested immediately after the explosion at the Serristori Barracks on the morning of the 23rd October, were executed on the morning of the 24th November 1868, in the Piazza de' Cerchi.

The execution of the capital sentence passed on these two poor workmen, whom all felt to be martyrs and victims of the national cause, aroused indignant grief throughout the Peninsula. Victor Emanuel himself had pleaded with the old Pope for a commutation of the sentence, but Pius IX. had been inexorable. Costa and the others who had taken an active part in the insurrection of which the explosion was only a detail, felt of course deeply the terrible event; and, had it not been for the very strong instances made them by the Italian Government, anxious at all costs to avoid further complications, they had determined to present themselves to the judicial authorities in Rome and bear their share of the responsibilities. But for the men themselves nothing could be done.

Giuseppe Monti, however, left behind him a young wife, Lucia, and a baby son only a year and eight months

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old. The Revolutionists thought it a sacred duty to provide for and protect the widow and orphan, and determined so to do at all costs. A subscription was at once opened, and a very large sum collected on their behalf. But Lucia Monti, after her husband's execution, had been at once surrounded by the priests, who were most anxious to shut her up in a monastery and take possession of her child.

The Liberals, on their side, were determined to save her from this dreary fate, but the enterprise was hedged around with difficulties. The woman was always followed and watched by *gendarmes* and spies, and it was impossible to have any communication with her. However, all these obstacles only served to sharpen the wits and strengthen the purpose of her husband's friends. Some ladies interested themselves on the poor woman's behalf, and entered into the plot to save her. Amongst these the most active were Signora Narducci (Costa's niece), Signora Placidi, and Mrs., now Lady Richmond, who, with her husband and baby son, were still in Rome.

As can easily be believed, the conspirators were no whit behind the Papal authority in sharpness and brains; their emissaries watched the unfortunate widow, carefully on the look-out to see that she was not spirited away by the Jesuits. One day, shortly after Monti's execution, the priests took Lucia to the Church of the Gesù, situated in the Piazza of that name, and conducted her to the sacristy, where she found a Jesuit father who laid great pressure on her to induce her to confess, and tell all she knew about her husband's accomplices—the wicked men who, as the good father put it, had led the unfortunate Monti to his ruin. The woman, however, a native of

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the *Marche*, persisted in an obstinate silence, merely repeating that she knew nothing, and replying to the exhortation of the Jesuit, who called on her to weep over the lost souls of her husband and son, and her own, that she did not feel that she *could* cry. Being unable to get anything further out of her, the priest inquired into her condition, which was one of absolute destitution (on the day of her husband's execution she had had nothing to eat). He promised her help, and told her to go on the following day to the convent of certain nuns, where she would doubtless have been sequestered; indeed, she only succeeded in getting off that day by urging that her old mother was at home awaiting her return.

In the church the woman was awaited by the emissaries of the Liberals, amongst whom was Signora Placidi, who was praying with much fervour at a side chapel. As soon as she saw Lucia Monti leave the sacristy, looking more angered than contrite, she went up to her, and calling on her by her name in an undertone, she made herself known for a friend, and told Lucia on leaving the church to jump into her carriage, which was waiting outside.

"I cannot, I am followed," came the whispered answer.

"Then we will find some other means," replied Signora Placidi, and, searching for her purse as if to give the woman some small alms, she let her pass out.

If the unfortunate widow was to be saved it was clear that there was no time to lose. The conspirators sent one of their number to the house where Lucia lived. This person, availing himself of the friendliness of the neighbours, left some money for la Monti, and arranged

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that she should contrive to get round to the house of Signora Placidi, who lived at No. 9 Piazza Trinità de' Monti. This was managed, and Lucia and her babe, whose yells greatly endangered the success of the scheme, were safely concealed in Signora Placidi's apartment.

In the evening Signor Narducci, a *mercante di campagna*, and brother-in-law to Costa, went round to Richmond at his studio.

"Will you do us a kindness," he inquired.

"Yes," came the answer.

"We have got the Monti. She must be got out of Rome and over the frontier to-morrow. It is her last chance."

Mrs. Richmond joined the conclave, and a plan was soon formed.

That same night a carriage drove up to Richmond's door. Narducci brought thither the Monti and her child. In the meantime the Richmonds had sent their own baby son, Francis, of the same age as the little Italian, with his wet-nurse to a safe retreat for the time being; and the plan they had settled on was that the Monti should pass as their *balia* (wet-nurse), and that her baby should take the place of the little Francis.

Lucia Monti, from a destitute-looking workwoman, was quickly transformed into an elegant *balia*, resplendent in the long ribbon streamers and the gold pendant earrings and corals of her kind. Richmond procured a passport from Joseph Severn; and tickets for Terni, the nearest town beyond the frontier of the Papal States, were purchased, thanks to a Liberal who was employed in the ticket-office; for so great was the anxiety of the Government not to let Monti's widow pass the frontier, that the

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utmost precautions had been taken at the railway-station to prevent her leaving.

Thus prepared, the party, consisting of Richmond, his wife, their supposed child, and the nurse, drove to the station. The train was watched by *gendarmes*, and it was rumoured that an order from the Government had been received to the effect that no woman with a child was to be allowed to leave the station that day. But no one thought for a moment of the English lady's nurse, who went off quietly, with every comfort.

When Terni was reached, Lucia Monti and her child were handed over to the care of a bodyguard of friends and sympathisers who conducted her to Florence, where she went straight to Costa's house in the Via San Frediano, and was received with open arms.

Mr. Richmond and his wife returned the same night to Rome, where they found the little one, who had been the unconscious means of saving an unfortunate mother and her child, safe and sound. The English artist was told later on that he was watched by the police for weeks after this adventure.

No wonder Italians of that generation nurture feelings of such warm gratitude towards the English. For though our Government never lent, in its official capacity, any active help to the Italian Revolution, still, if all the active sympathy and helpful deeds which individuals, often at considerable personal risk, contributed to the cause of Italian liberty, which they so cherished, could be recorded, it would, beyond doubt, prove a very substantial record indeed.

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CHAPTER IX

WORK IN FLORENCE: THE ENTRY INTO ROME, 1868–70

THE period of nearly three years, from November 1867 to August 1870, which Costa passed in Florence, was devoted to his art work.

He settled down in an apartment with a studio in an old palace, at No. 10 Via San Frediano, on the farther side of the Arno. It was a ground floor apartment, with a beautiful garden, and here he remained whilst in Florence.

The unfinished picture of "La France se renouvelle toujours" was forwarded him by his English friends from his studio in Rome, and on this again he worked hard at intervals.

To these years belongs the picture, "An Evening in the Cascine, Florence," one of his most beautiful works. The spot chosen by the artist is near the end of the wood on the banks of the Arno, known as the Cascine, and now the fashionable drive of the Florentines. One of those glorious golden sunsets so frequent in Italy, the apotheosis of a hot, splendid day, irradiates sky and river with its wealth of colour, glorifying the peaceful scene. As is frequent with Costa, some small figures lend a human interest to the view; a mother lies on the green bank of the river, lazily watching her two babes, who are gambolling about on the green bank

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naked, after their splash in the water. Of this charming picture no black and white reproduction can give a true idea, for its beauty depends on the sense of suffused colour, on the warm atmosphere which it makes us feel.

This work was sent by Costa in 1872 to London for exhibition at the Royal Academy, along with two others—one of plunging horses winnowing corn in the Campagna, and another small view of Leghorn. On its journey the glass got smashed and the canvas slightly damaged, and Costa gathered from a letter which he received on the subject that the work was ruined. This naturally greatly distressed him. It was a picture on which he had spent much time and love, and as he had by him the study from nature, he at once set to work to make a replica of the original. When this work was already well in hand, he received the following letter from Leighton :—

[*Translation.*]

"LONDON, *13th May* 1872.

"DEAREST NINO,—If I have not yet answered your kind letter, it was because I preferred to await the opening of the exhibition, so as to be able when writing to give you some news of your pictures.

"The exhibition has now been open a week, and perhaps you will have guessed why I have not yet spoken of your works. I had not the courage to tell you that the jury this year has been most severe towards foreign artists, and your pictures, along with many others, have not found a place on the walls of the Academy, which they would certainly have honoured. This is the bad news which I had not the courage to send you.

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"Now then comes the better news which makes me write.

"George [Mason] disgusted, not less than myself, at the verdict of the jury, had the good idea to send round to me a friend and Mæcenas of his to view your pictures, which are now under my roof; and this excellent inspiration bore fruit, as the said lover of art bought on the spot your 'Winnowing' picture. Nor is this all; for, as he did not find me in the studio the day he came round with George, he returned again a few days later, and I got him to purchase the Arno [picture of the Cascine] (which I will repair as best I can) and your little view of Leghorn of last year. I hope I did not make a mistake in fixing its price at *thirty*, as I think I remember you had decided. I have fixed the prices at guineas and not pounds, so that the sum is £157, 10s., which will soon be in the hands of Hooker in your name. I trust that this will somewhat console you for the exhibition failure.

"I heard with real pleasure that our amiable prince and his wife had been at your studio; they are both of them most kind (*gentilissimi*). . . .—Your affectionate friend, FEDERICO."

The three pictures here mentioned were afterwards purchased at a London sale by the Rev. Stopford Brooke, to whom they now belong.

Costa, however, completed the replica of the *Cascine* picture, which was quite as successful as the original, and which remained in the artist's studio, becoming on his death the property of his family.

It was in these years, too, that Nino first met

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Signorina Maria Antonia Miniati, who, later on, became his wife. She was a beautiful young girl, with splendid dull gold hair and brilliant complexion, with all the grace and charm of Florentines when they *are* beautiful, and the artist could not but be struck with her appearance. He requested her to sit to him for her portrait, a work which then occupied much of his time, and which now remains the property of the widow.

The young girl was a true patriot at heart, brought up from childhood in the love of the national cause, and she was, moreover, liberally gifted with the inborn artistic taste and sentiment of her race. So it was only natural that the admiration for the great artist, who had just returned from risking his life in his country's battles, surrounded by a halo of patriotism and romance, gifted with the irresistible charm of genius, should ripen into love and marriage, a marriage celebrated in 1870.

During this period, too, Costa worked on the large picture "A Scirocco Day on the Sea-Coast near Rome," which I have mentioned amongst the pictures begun in the Roman Campagna between the years 1853–59.

This work was purchased from the artist, in 1879, by the Rev. Stopford Brooke, whose eloquent words, addressed on this occasion to Costa, give so true an idea of the character and feeling of the work, that I here print the letter:—

"LONDON, *July* 16, 1879.

"DEAR SIGNOR COSTA,—Is it really true, is it really possible that I am to have that wonderful and beautiful picture which I saw to-day?

"Only once before has any modern picture given me so much delight. There is nothing in it which

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PLATE XVIII

SIGRA. ANTONIA COSTA

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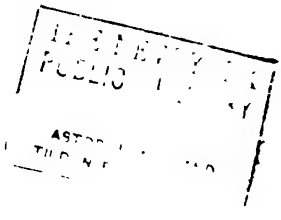

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does not afford me pleasure. I like its unity of feeling; I like the way in which Nature herself seems to have been at work in it; and I like even more in it that which it is beyond Nature's power to do, and which belongs to the artist alone. I like the old classic sadness in it, and the sadness, closer to us, of the poor man whose life and toil are a part of the nature about him, and with whom the trees sympathise. And the technical work, so far as I can presume to speak about it, gives me another pleasure, which greater knowledge would increase, but which is at one with all the rest. But I should write too much if I said all it says to me. I like it from end to end, and with all my heart. I never saw a picture which was more at one with itself, and itself suits my temper of imagination absolutely.—Ever yours sincerely, STOPFORD A. BROOKE."

I understand that this picture will ultimately find its place in our national collection.

Costa's English friends—Leighton, Richmond, George Howard—visited him more than once during this time.

Leighton was in the habit of visiting Italy nearly every year, staying a few weeks to make studies of heads and landscape backgrounds, and to refresh himself with a draught at the great fountain-head of Italian art. These visits used generally to terminate in a brief artistic tour of two or three days' duration, on which Costa was his almost invariable companion; and most of the large mass of letters from Leighton which Costa preserved are notes fixing the dates of arrival, giving temporary addresses, hours of trains, &c., letters written in the

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most perfect and coloquial Italian, and with all the *abandon* and charm of real intimacy, but of which few contain matter of any interest to the general reader. A few, however, are so characteristic in their modes of expression and in the descriptions of scenery, that they will find their proper place in these pages.

In Florence the friends used to visit more especially the Masaccios in the Carmine Church, and the unfinished "Adoration" by Lionardo — especial favourites with Leighton. But great as was the Englishman's love of Italy, he could not be induced to let it interfere with his methodical way of life, and Costa, in his "Notes on Lord Leighton"[1] already referred to, remembers how on one occasion he was unable to induce his friend to prolong a deeply enjoyed stay in Florence, because he had already written to a model, making an appointment with him in his London studio. A letter from Costa to a mutual friend brought the information that, as Leighton mounted his staircase on his return from abroad, the model was mounting that which gave access to the studio.

With Richmond, who came to visit him in the Via San Frediano, Nino sketched and studied from nature in the surrounding country, and many were the visits paid together to the inexhaustible art treasures of Florence. Costa was always searching, always learning; and though he held fast to his own individual vision, he ever strove to acquire that scientific certainty of technique which the Venetians of the great age could boast. He went to stay with Richmond in Assisi, and together they roamed the country-side, or looked at the

[1] "Notes on Lord Leighton," *Cornhill Magazine*, London, March 1897.

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frescoes by Cimabue and Giotto; and Richmond repaid the visit to his friend at Serpiolo, a village not far from Florence, in that part of the Apennines known as the Casentino, in the midst of exquisite wooded mountain scenery. There, as Sir William Richmond says, ever indefatigable, our artist was up and out at dawn watching and recording nature. During the heat of the day diligently painting in a cool studio, and again in the evening out and at work till sunset; afterwards walking and talking during the brief but exquisite moments of Italian twilight.

Costa also accompanied his friend in 1868 to the sea-coast near Pisa, revealing to him the beauties of the scenery at the Gombo, where Richmond remained some time to paint.

It was during this time, too, that Costa painted "A Vineyard Outside Florence," belonging to Lord Carlisle, and a "Kitchen Garden near Florence," purchased by Lord Ronald Gower, as well as many other beautiful and delicate works which remain in his studio; one of which, a view from the *Esta Canina*, has only just been rediscovered in his studio, where it had been mislaid for nearly thirty years, by Signora Costa, who has thus brought to light one of the most charming and delicate panels of the artist's middle period.

The discovery of the real authorship of the bust of Savonarola, and the vicissitudes and final rescue of la Monti and her child were also incidents belonging to these months, which occupied much of the artist's time and thoughts, as his correspondence with Cristiano Banti and his niece, Signora Narducci, shows.

But the record of years of work, though it is they

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which give us the enduring part of an artist's life, must be read in the pictures which have fixed for us his impressions and the results of his ceaseless studies and research. They cannot afford much entertaining matter to the pen of a biographer, and we must pass once more on to the political struggle which claimed so large a part of Costa's energies, and which, with the disastrous turn taken for the French by the Franco-Prussian war in 1870, again brought the Roman question to the fore, offering a solution of the problem, if not the most satisfactory one in the eyes of Costa, and of many patriots who shared his views.

Both as a Roman and a patriot Costa felt deeply what a difference it would make to the new nation if the gates of Rome were opened by the Romans to the Italians; if the great city placed herself at the head of Italy, instead of being stormed, conquered by force of arms. The Roman, brought up in the veneration of his city, could not contemplate with anything but grief the prospect that her liberation should be brought about as a violence, and not as the result of a spontaneous effort.

Thus, when the events of 1870 made it clear that the solution of the Roman question was at hand, when Louis Napoleon, at the beginning of August, decided to withdraw the French troops from Rome, and return to the Convention of September 1864, Costa and a small body of some seven exiled Roman patriots decided to attempt to enter Rome (spite of the fact that the Papal Government had condemned them to death for their share in the insurrection of 1867), and there organise a movement for opening the city gates to the Italian troops, and presenting in the name of Rome the keys of the Quirinal Palace to the King of Italy.

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But if there was one thing that the Government presided over by General Lanza was determined to prevent, it was that the revolutionary party—the party of Garibaldi and Mazzini, the party which had performed the miracle of raising Italy from the dead, and which had presented to Victor Emanuel, after an expedition which will always remain one of the most surprising of the world's heroic deeds, the kingdom of the Two Sicilies and upwards of ten million subjects—should have any share in the reunion of Rome with the rest of the Peninsula. As fate willed it, as the nation insisted on it, to Rome it would go, but it would enter the city through a breach in the venerable walls, prepared to go almost any length, even to that of renouncing a whole district of the city (that known as the Leonine city, comprising the Vatican, Borgo, and Castel St. Angelo), so as to conciliate the irreconcilable Pontiff; but determined to make it clear that the heroes of the Republic of 1849, the martyrs of Mentana, the patriots and exiles who had risked property and life to save their native land from priestly rule, should have no share in the final redemption, no voice in the new order of things; determined that it should be possible for the clerical party to say with truth that the Piedmontese had taken Rome by storm, and opened the royal palace with a skeleton key.

So strong was this determination on the part of Lanza and his cabinet that one of the first steps taken by him, when it was clear that the journey to Rome could no longer be much delayed, was to station strong detachments of troops along the frontier of the Papal State, so as to prevent the entry of revolutionary emissaries into that territory; and Lanza, with telegrams to the prefects

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of Caserta and Sassari, dated 8th September 1870, ordered the rigorous confinement of Mazzini in the fortress of Gaeta, and the detention of Garibaldi at Caprera.

It was under these conditions that Costa and his comrades managed to enter the Roman Campagna towards the beginning of August. There they passed nearly two months in a vain endeavour to enter Rome.

The plan they hoped to execute was to go up the Tiber to the city. But, after Mentana, the only political organisation which had been able to survive in the city was the National Committee, and it was on this body that the small band had to rely for the boats which were to have taken them to Rome. What we have already said about the attitude of this Committee, a creature of the Florentine *Consorteria*, makes it by no means surprising that the boats were never obtainable. All sorts of excuses and reasons were deduced to dissuade Costa and his party from their attempt, and to prevent their effecting their purpose.

Thus hampered by the Government, and abandoned by the only party in the city which could have facilitated the enterprise, Costa and his friends were unable to execute their project.

During nearly seven weeks they wandered about the desolate and malarious Campagna, wasting their energies in fruitless efforts, living as best they might, stopping now in this, now in that estate; sleeping more often on the bare ground, under the open sky, than under a roof; sowing, undoubtedly, the seeds of future disease in that fever-laden atmosphere.

The month of September was drawing to an end when at last the army corps, commanded by General

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PLATE XIX

"A SCIROCCO DAY ON THE SEA COAST NEAR ROME"

In the possession of Rev. Stopford Brooke

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Cadorna,[1] after many orders and counter-orders received from Florence, decided on decisive action. The walls of Rome were to be attacked at several points by the different divisions, but the strength of the Italians was to be concentrated in storming Porta Pia and its adjacent ramparts.

On the 18th, Costa and his companions—amongst whom were the Count Michele Amedei, Achille della Bitta, Luciani, Francia, Migliaccio, and Ludovisi—presented themselves to Cadorna, offering their services in the capacity of guides to the column of attack, in the hope of thus being the first to enter the Eternal City. Their offer was willingly accepted, as capable guides were much needed.

By 4.30 on the morning of the 20th, operations were already begun. The troops with whom Costa and his friends were stationed just before the assault, halted near the ancient Church of St. Agnes, about two miles outside Porta Pia. Costa himself narrated his performances on that memorable day to me, and I will tell them in his own words :—

"I and my friends, anxious to be amongst the first to enter the city, provided ourselves with a ladder, with the help of which we scaled the walls of the vineyards and villas which lie between St. Agnese and the Porta Pia.

"I remember that, on scaling the walls of one of these vineyards, we found ourselves face to face with a small detachment of Papal Zouaves, who were quietly seated round a marble table enjoying a huge and delicious water-melon. When they saw our heads appear above the wall which

[1] Raffaelo Cadorna, *La Liberazione di Roma nell' anno* 1870, *ed il Plebiscito* Roux. Torino-Roma, 1889.

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we were preparing to jump, they took alarm, ignoring our scanty numbers, and fled out of the enclosure, whilst we, quietly accomplishing our plan, lingered a moment to refresh ourselves with the water-melon, a welcome reward of our eager zeal.

"In this way we reached the Villa Torlonia, just by the city walls, where we found a column of Italian troops, under General Angelino, ready to begin the attack on the Porta Pia, and at the head of this column we placed ourselves. The gate was fortified by redoubts, and defended by artillery. From the Villa Torlonia we boldly marched along the high road to the assault.

"Marching in the first ranks I met an old friend, Augusto Valenzani, a lieutenant in the 40th regiment of infantry. He had been, years before, a chamberlain of the Pope's, and we had last seen each other when fleeing from Rome in 1849, and we then had sworn to be together at the liberation of the city. And here, mindful of his oath, I found him at the head of the column.

"Valenzani wore spectacles, and as we marched on under the fire of the enemy I turned to him, saying, 'It is strange that your glasses have not yet been broken.' At that instant a bullet caught him in the head, and he fell dying in my arms. With a last embrace, I said, 'Thank fate, friend, you have died well,' and, stepping aside, I laid him in the shade of a low wall; then rushing on to the attack, I was amongst the first who leapt the barricade, and entered Rome by the gate, not by the breach, of Porta Pia.

"I at once made two prisoners whom I disarmed, and, along with the others, I helped to disarm the guards. We then marched on to the French Embassy, where two

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companies of Zouaves were stationed, shouldering their guns, ready, at a moment's notice, to take part in the fight had the order come.

"Thence we marched on, arriving at the Piazza Monte Cavallo, in front of the Quirinal Palace, before the advent of the army.

"We were enabled to proceed thus far without being stopped, as we got mixed up in the *cortège* of the diplomatic corps to the Holy See, which, in official uniform, and in state carriages, was proceeding to the headquarters of General Cadorna, in the hopes of being able to have a voice in the treaty of capitulation. In this way we managed to pass on undisturbed, except for one small incident. I was shouldering two guns which I had taken from my prisoners, and one of the dragoons in the suite of the ambassadors wished to stop me and disarm me. However, I pointed my pistol at him, and so got rid of the insolent fellow, who was compelled to hurry off to follow behind the carriages of the ambassadors.

"After some time we were joined in the Piazza Monte Cavallo by the division of the Italian troops with whom we had entered Porta Pia, which was then stationed in the Piazza.

"I and my friends, however, proceeded into the city. We divided into two groups; one, headed by Luciani, mounted on a magnificent steed which he had captured that day from an officer, started off down the Corso; the other, which I led, branched off in the direction of the Trajan column.

"There we found ourselves in for a fight. The walls which surround the sunk space of the Forum of Trajan had been transformed into excellent barricades, and were defended by a body of the peasants of the *Ciociaria*

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(district near Rome), whom the Pope enrolled as a sort of armed police-force, and who were commonly known as *Zampetti*. We took refuge in a shop at one end of the Piazza, situated between the two churches of Sta. Maria di Loreto and Sta. Maria di Vienna. This shop had two entrances, and here we barricaded ourselves, firing on the enemy from behind the shutters, to the terror of a good woman who kept the establishment, and who was surrounded by a lot of frightened children. She kept calling out, imploring me to go away. 'Go away, for God's sake, and do not cause a poor mother to be massacred!' she kept on crying, whilst the wailing children clung to my legs, impeding my every movement.

"At last, unwilling to remain trapped as prisoners, we made a bold sally, and rushing out, we redirected our steps towards the Quirinal, and whilst we were retreating, Francia, one of our little band, was shot in the leg. We moved him into an open doorway in safety, till he could be properly cared for, and then proceeded to the Quirinal, in front of which we found the Italian troops stationed.

"There I was in time to witness a curious and not unhumiliating scene. The Italian authorities were searching for a locksmith who might open with a skeleton key the Quirinal Palace, which the Papal Government, spite of the terms of the treaty of capitulation, had left closed and barred. This locksmith was at last found in the person of Maso (Tommaso) de Sanctis, brother to an artist of that name, who speedily and skilfully performed the burglarious deed, which was to admit to the Papal Palace the representative of the Italian King. Thus the hopes which I, and those who thought like me, cherished, miserably failed; for we had conceived it our duty, a duty which we had

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striven hard to perform, to open the gates of Rome and of the Royal Palace to our Italian brothers."[1]

With the entry of the Italians into Rome the Papal Government ceased, *ipso facto*, to exist. The Italian Government, anxious to prove to the whole world that the union of Italy under Victor Emanuel was desired by the populations, and was not the result of any violence done to them, had decided that each province should govern itself autonomously until the result of the plebiscite should be known. The temporary councils, which were to govern during this interim, were to be elected freely by the populations without any interference on the part of the Italian authorities. But this promise, as we shall see, was not strictly maintained; for, in Rome at least, General Cadorna, acting under the orders of the Florentine *Consorteria*, had reason to fear that the strong Republican and Liberal element might get too much the upper hand.

Immediately after the incidents above related, Costa, surrounded by a crowd of citizens, jubilant at seeing the streets at last freed from the Papal mercenaries, went straight off to the Capitol, the historic seat of the Roman municipality.

On his arrival at the Senatorial Palace, Costa, who was looked upon by the populace as its natural leader, found diverse citizens assembled, who had foregathered there to attend to the most urgent public business. Amongst these were Don Ignazio Buoncompagni, Prince of Piombino,

[1] This incident, related by Costa, must refer to the opening of the main entrance of the Quirinal, which, according to the terms of the capitulation, ought to have been given over at once to the Italian authorities. It was not till the 26th of October that the belongings of the diverse officials of the former government began to be removed. On the 8th November the door of the principal apartment in the palace was broken open by the locksmith, Pietro Capannaro, and not till the 20th January was the work of clearing the Quirinal of property belonging to the Vatican completed.

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Don Emanuele Ruspoli, Angelo Silvestrelli, and Vincenzo Rossi.

These citizens, all persons of note, showed Costa a list which they had drawn up so as to form a provisional council. Amongst the names his own figured; but Costa declared that he could not work with some of the people who were on the list, and prepared to leave the Capitol. His presence, however, was felt by all to be indispensable, and he was detained by persuasion and force in their midst.

Then, seeing how matters stood, and the urgent need to attend to the most necessary measures, in the complete absence of any properly constituted authority and of all the municipal employees, Costa determined to assume the full responsibility of the situation, and installed himself in the Capitol, where, along with Vincenzo Rossi, he remained all night; and, indeed, he may be said to have ruled Rome during three days.

I will again give our artist's own account of those stirring and momentous days, which witnessed the final realisation of the greatest achievement of the nineteenth century—the unification and independence of Italy:—

"After these events I went straight off to the Capitol, where, in the absence of all regularly constituted authority, I set to work to make the most necessary and immediate arrangements. Quarters had to be found for the Italian troops, and knowing Rome well as I did, I settled this point, taking care that the spacious palaces of the Roman nobility were utilised to the full.

"Remarkable order prevailed in Rome. The streets were crowded with the jubilant populace; the citizens fraternised with the military; houses were decorated and illuminated; but no excesses were committed.

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"In the evening a great crowd assembled in the Capitol, in front of the Senatorial Palace, demanding the liberation of the political prisoners detained in the Papal prisons, the number of whom, after the events of 1867, had been constantly increasing.

"The demonstration was so imposing, that I had to come out on to the balcony and harangue the crowd. I said that it was impossible to carry out the liberation thus hastily in the night, as the infamous government of the priests had herded together the political and common-law prisoners, so that it was necessary to discriminate carefully between the two.

"The crowd, however, insisted in its demands, shouting out, 'But we know them; you know them! Let us free them now!'

"The officers who had taken part in the military expedition were bivouacking in the *Sala dei Conservatori.* I got them to step out on to the balcony, which was lit up by torchlight, and turning to the crowd, I pointed to them, saying: 'You see these men? In five hours they have taken Rome! And yet, for the sake of discipline and order, they have been stationed two months in the midst of the fever-stricken Campagna. I am certain that our political heroes will willingly spend one more night in prison, whence they will be borne out in triumph on your arms to-morrow; and thus we shall avoid all danger of letting out, along with them, the thieves and murderers.'

"This argument, and the assurance given, satisfied the assembled people, who quietly dispersed, and on the morrow I had the honour of signing the decree for the liberation of the political prisoners.

"Some years later, Queen Margherita once said to me:

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'You were the first, were you not, to enter Rome by the breach of Porta Pia?' 'Not by the breach, madam,' I replied, 'but by the gate; and I had the honour of signing, in the Capitol, the decree for the liberation of the political prisoners.' 'You had there a fine reward for your patriotism,' the Queen remarked."

On the very next day, 21st Sept., Costa and others, amongst whom his old friend, Mattia Montecchi, who had returned to Rome from his long exile that very morning, set to work to get a legally constituted council elected in which no preference should be given to any political party but in which all shades of citizens should be represented They considered that this council should apply itself exclusively to municipal matters, and should only be appointed for a very brief time. On the list they prepared, figured the names of Don Onorato Caetani, Prince Odescalchi, Don Ignazio Buoncompagni, Don Emanuele Ruspoli, Professor Baccelli, Mattia Montecchi, Vincenzo Rossi, and Costa himself. After much parleying with General Masi and General Cadorna, the list was finally completed with the name of Don Michele Caetani, Duke of Sermoneta, at its head, and on the following day, 22nd September, at a great popular meeting held in the Colosseum, the list was publicly approved by acclamation.

However, it was well known to all that, in spite of the repeated declarations made by the Government as to the absolute impartiality it meant to observe towards the election and actions of these temporary administrations, the names of those thus elected would not be agreeable to General Cadorna, who, spite of all protestations of neutrality, was determined not only not to let the advanced party get the upper hand, but not to let any steps be taken

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that might not be quite to the taste of the Government in Florence. Anyhow, of those elected, Costa, Montecchi, and Rossi were the only ones who went to the Capitol.

It is characteristic of the artist that, during his brief residence in the Capitol, one of his first thoughts was for the great works of art there housed; and with his usual impetuosity he hastened to remove the plaster leaves and stupid bits of drapery with which the prudishness of the priestly government had seen fit to deface the statues, smashing these on the pedestals of those noble works of ancient art.

On the 23rd September, General Cadorna proceeded to name another council of his own choosing, charged with the government of Rome and the province.

Costa, Montecchi, and Rossi were turned out of office by the decree of the General, and the Capitol, where the new council was installed, was surrounded by Bersaglieri, who had orders to repel them should they attempt to fulfil the duties which their public election had imposed on them. Costa was the only one who, on the 24th, tried to mount as usual the steps leading to the Capitol, but he found himself face to face with the military, and was forced to retire.[1]

This unjustifiable action on the part of Cadorna gave

[1] In connection with this incident, Costa related to me an anecdote which would lose all point in translation, but which is so characteristic of his incisive and biting sarcasm, that I give it here in Italian for the benefit of such of my readers as understand the language :—

"Quando io montavo al Campidoglio il 24 Settembre, un ufficiale dei Bersaglieri mi fermò, mettendomi la mano al petto, e domandòmmi chi ero. Risposi—'Giovanni Costa.' Lui mi rispose—'Castrati?'" (referring to Filippo Costa-Castrati, one of the members of the new council). "'No davvero!' risposi prontamente; e l'ufficiale di ripicco 'Allora la respingo.' Ed io 'E Lei, che appartiene alla gloriosa arma dei Bersaglieri ha mandato di respingere dal Campidoglio i non-castrati?' 'Silenzio,' fu l'unica risposta datami dall' ufficiale, che mi minacciava colla punta della spada, quantunque ridesse sotto i folti baffi."

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rise to a formal protest, signed by Costa, Montecchi, and Rossi, which was presented to the General by a public notary; but, as the writers had foreseen, it had of course no effect.

On the 2nd of October the plebiscite, which was to decide the fate of Rome, was held; none too soon for the peace of mind of General Cadorna, who found that even the council named by himself was none too submissive to his wishes.

On this occasion, Costa and his friends found means once more to make themselves useful to their country.

By express wish of the Italian Government, the part of Rome known as the Leonine City had not been occupied by the Italian troops, though at the request of the Vatican a detachment had been sent there to guard the Papal Palace, and preserve order against the population, clamorous and eager not to be excluded from the general liberation.

In consequence of this strange resolution, this district, in the heart of which had occurred not long before the massacre of the lion-hearted Giuditta Tavani Arquati and her children, was excluded from the official plebiscite.

Costa, his friend Castellani of the 1848 days, Parboni, Erculei, and a few others, erected in the Piazzetta di Borgo a platform, on which, despite the Government, they placed the urn for the votes, and thus held the plebiscite, laying siege in the name of Italy to the fortress of theocracy.

The public enthusiasm was indeed indescribable when this urn, preceded by bands and banners, and surmounted by a placard on which was written in huge letters, *Città Leonina, Si,* was carried to the Capitol, where the result of the plebiscite was proclaimed — 40,835

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votes in favour of union under Victor Emanuel; 46 against it.

The great work was now accomplished in every particular. Italy which, in 1827, had been pronounced a *mere geographical expression*, was now a free and united nation, destined by its natural position and advantages, and by the great qualities of the Italian race, which had given such noble proof of its heroism and abnegation in a half century of struggle, to assume a position of ever-growing importance amongst the powers of Europe.

And, with the completion of the task to which he had first dedicated himself as a youth of twenty, Costa's political career came to an end.

As we have seen, following his steps through the complicated intricacies of Italian history of those years, his share in the work of redemption had been by no means a small one. He had conspired and fought, always ready to undertake dangerous and thankless work. But his name is not one which we come upon in the official or semi-official history of the *Risorgimento*. A conspiracy of silence has prevailed hitherto as to his patriotic work; and in Italy, at least till quite lately, the same has been true of his artistic work. We must go to the original documents, hunt up old files of correspondence preserved in the state library, look up the survivors who played an active part in the history of those times, and then we constantly come across his name, and realise that here again, as is so often the case, it is not always those who have got themselves most talked of, who have come in for the most lucrative positions, and honorary titles, who have borne the brunt of battle.

Costa never liked politics, never went in for them

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for what they might give him, but always for what he might give them. And though he was not blind nor totally indifferent to the neglect of his countrymen, he certainly never in any way tried to push himself forward, shirking, rather than no, the few official honours which came his way. What he had done for Italy, he had done from conviction and patriotism. To his honour, be it said, he came out of the struggle far poorer than he had entered it, anxious and delighted to return to his art, as he himself told me, "*sotto l'usbergo di sentirsi puro.*"

Before, however, passing on to the concluding chapters in which I shall review the artistic work which he accomplished in the last thirty years of his life, let us here glance at the further part he took in public affairs.

Shortly after the entry of the Italians into Rome he settled finally in his native city, whither his wife followed him, staying in rooms in the Via Mario de' Fiori whilst awaiting the transfer of their furniture and belongings from Florence to Rome.

When the first town council for the new capital was elected, in November 1870, Costa was elected for the Trastevere district, a post which he occupied consecutively for seven years. And, very shortly after his election, the dreadful inundation of the Tiber, one of the most serious which history records, afforded him at once the necessity and the opportunity for displaying all his energy, the broad humanitarianism and ready sympathy with the poor and suffering which all who knew Costa admired in him.

On that occasion he was indefatigable in organising

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rescue parties, and in bringing help and food to the poor who most suffered by this disaster. The Trastevere district, one of the most low-lying as well as one of the poorest of Rome, was the most seriously damaged, and here his intimate knowledge of his native parish and of its inhabitants, enabled him to make his efforts all the more efficacious. For over a fortnight he was almost always out, hardly ever returning home, even at night; personally superintending the work of rescue; paying with his own purse where the public money failed. His young wife, then quite new to Rome, well remembers the anxiety and distress of those long days, when her husband was out from morn till night, often in very real danger.

With the entry of the Italians into Rome began the complete transformation of the ancient and venerable city. The population rapidly grew; the habits and customs of modern civilisation and comfort entered along with the more progressive northern Italians; and along with these real needs, the desire of the Government to leave a permanent impress on the city, to create the "Third Rome"; above all, the greedy horde of speculators who settled down, like a swarm of vultures, on the new capital, all contributed to bring about the great municipal changes of the past thirty years. The aedile fever, as it is spoken of in Italy, broke out. In this matter Costa, while recognising the necessity of building new quarters for the ever-growing population, and of introducing modern ideas of hygiene and decency, acted in the council, to the best of his ability, as a moderating influence, doing his best to restrain the fever of destruction which prevailed.

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He was loud in maintaining that new buildings should be built in new districts, and did his utmost to preserve as much of old Rome as possible. One of the projects which he helped successfully to oppose, was that of clearing large modern squares in front of some of the old monuments, such, for instance, as the *Fontana di Trevi*. Costa considered, quite rightly, that the effect and beauty of architecture depends more on a true sense of proportion than on anything else. This was a fact keenly realised in all ages which have given a real, a vital architecture, and which is notably lacking in our own age, in which architecture, at least in Italy, is a dead art. Nothing, then, could be more disastrous to a building or monument than to enlarge unduly its surroundings, as thus the sense of proportion would be lost, the effect of grandeur done away with.

Architecture, Costa used to say, is the revelation in stone of an epoch. And as such he was in favour of allowing and encouraging new constructions, provided that they did not interfere with the old parts of a town.

The architecture and public monuments of the Third Italy were, according to him, the revelation of her moral status; and as her liberation had been brought about in a large measure by strokes of luck, instead of being the result solely of principles and ideals unswervingly pursued and striven for, so these manifestations in stone were lacking above all else in a sense of homogeneity, of proportion.

The huge, lumbering, and pretentious new law-courts, not yet opened but already an eyesore, he used to stigmatise as a colossal monument of stupidity.

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Work in Florence

Of the great national monument to Victor Emanuel, on which the Italian nation is spending 40,000,000 francs, and which has already been in hand getting on for twenty years, he used to say that it was impossible, as yet, to judge of its final effect; but that it was undoubtedly a work carried out by a man of very superior gifts (the Conte Sacconi), far more carefully attended to in matters of detail and ornament than is the case with the majority of modern buildings. Still he judged from the project and plans that there would certainly be a lack of proportion between the window spaces and the body of the building.

He was also opposed to the choice (determined by considerations of a political and historical order) of the site on which this immense monument is rising. Modern buildings of such a large and showy order ought never to be placed in juxtaposition to those of another age; and, above all, so many fine and interesting survivals of the past as the Palazzo Torlonia, the wing of Palazzo Venezia, and the many other buildings sacrificed, should never, to his mind, have been pulled down to make way for a modern work. The new districts of Rome, so noticeably lacking in fine buildings, would have offered a far more suitable environment.

During his term of office on the town council, Costa belonged to the committee of management of the Capitoline Museums and art collections, and here again he did his best to fight against the decadent feeling in art matters which then prevailed in Italy, striving his utmost to remove Carlino (Charley) Dolci (as he used to call the Bolognese painter) from the post of honour which he then enjoyed in the picture galleries of the Peninsula. And all this

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time he did his utmost, whenever opportunity offered, to encourage young men of talent, and to fight against vulgarity and commercialism in art.

To say that modern Italy realised Costa's hopes and ideals would be far from the truth. Like most of the men of his generation, like Garibaldi and Mazzini and many less renowned, patriotism was with him a passion. United Italy, free Italy, the Italy of his youthful aspirations, the Italy of 1848, was a spotless divinity raised on the altar of his holiest thoughts, pure, heroic, the result of sacrifice and suffering, unsullied by compromise, intrigue, interested self-seeking. But though dissatisfied and disappointed in many ways (for he was one of those rare men whose enthusiasms and ideals do not die with their youth), though often severe to a degree in his judgments, which he would express with that epigrammatic incisiveness for which he had a perfect genius, he was not a pessimist, nor a cynical grumbler.

He could write to a friend: "*l'Italia, che fu detta la terra dei morti, ora che è risorta, è divenuta la terra dei beccamorti*" (Italy, which was called the land of the dead, now that she has re-risen, has become the land of undertakers), but he never became one of those undertakers. His love made him judge severely, because he knew what Italy was capable of, but it also made him hope. He looked towards the future, which opened a radiant prospect of possible greatness, and towards this ultimate goal he always urged and strove. Never a flatterer, but neither a pessimist, his message to the last was always one of hope; for he loved, and, where love is, there is faith and hope also.

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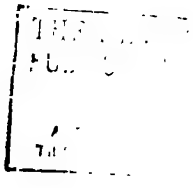

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PLATE XX

"IL SOSPIRO DELLA SERA"

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CHAPTER X

TWENTY YEARS' FIGHT FOR ART, 1870–90

In 1870 the Spanish-Neapolitan school of art carried all before it in Rome.

Mariano Fortuny was the presiding genius of this period of decadence and degradation. The brilliant Spaniard, after his Parisian triumphs, had settled down in a studio in the Via Flaminia in Rome, surrounded by a group of compatriots, amongst whom the most notable names are those of Pradilla, the painter of historical subjects, Moreno, Villegas, Barbado, Moratilla. The Spanish Academy on the Janiculum, officially presided over by Palmaroli, followed in the steps of this master of showy technique, who, along with the Neapolitan school of landscape painters, set the fashion in Rome. It was the school of technical bravura, of vulgarity in execution, and triviality in thought. *Genre* pictures of cardinals in scarlet robes, and ladies in silk and satin, flashy in colour and startling in chiaroscuro, though for the most part lacking in the inimitable, if essentially vulgar, virtuosity which characterised the Spanish master, sold well, and were produced plentifully by the artists of the day, who had lost all sense of the dignity of their art, and who worked with a view to the tastes of English and American tourists, and to the interests of their own pockets. The wave of youthful enthusiasm and desire for serious study, which had passed over the Tuscan artists in the early

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'sixties, had not penetrated the closed walls of the papal city, and everything had yet to be done if a new life was to be breathed into the new capital.

So absolute was the sway of the *Bottega*, of commercialism in the Roman art world, that any painter bold enough to strike an independent and discordant note was made the butt of universal derision and abuse.

This was strikingly exemplified by the experience of Enrico Coleman, son of that Charles Coleman whose work produced so deep an impression on young Costa and Mason in the early 'fifties.

Enrico, who possessed a strong artistic personality, and who had developed along the lines of his father's art, exhibited in 1872 at the International Artists' Club a picture representing some buffaloes. This work had the misfortune of being sincere, a piece of life carefully and thoughtfully studied, and as such it brought down on its author the ridicule, even more than the abuse, of his contemporaries. He was literally snuffed out by the contemptuous sneers and loud laughter of critics and artists, friends and adversaries. He and his work were ridiculed, caricatured in the comic papers of the day, treated as a huge, if somewhat ill-judged, joke. Enrico Coleman, who was young, and doubtful of his own gifts, came to the conclusion that he must have been wrong, that he had doubtless been guilty of gross error in going direct to nature for inspiration, and he went over to the all-triumphant school which had earned for itself the nickname of *Contarini* by its prolific production of *Abbati* and *contini* dancing attendance on fine ladies resplendent in satin and laces. And had it not been for the salutary influence which the sincere and convinced, biting but

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purifying pen of Nino Costa exercised on the more thoughtful artists of his day, Italy would, in this case, have lost one of her most characteristic painters.

Costa, as his whole life shows, was a born fighter. His country no longer needed his rifle, and he turned all his energies, all his enthusiasm, to the fight for high ideals in art. The record of the next twenty years of his life is the record of one ceaseless struggle against what he considered insincere, unwholesome, noxious in the art of his country; a struggle from which he was to come out the most unpopular artist in Italy, which produced a conspiracy of silence around his name and works in his own land, but which was to leave an indelible mark on the Italian art history of those years, and to sow seed from which the future harvest may be expected.

In this struggle his principal weapon was his work. He went on producing, year after year, new pictures, showing the same thoughtful care, the same humility of the lover of nature, seeking to interpret her, not only in her external forms, but also in her spirit and sentiment, which characterised the first studies of the student in the woody solitudes of Ariccia. But besides his work, which will always remain a monument of dignified sincerity in an age of shallow artificialities, Costa used every other means in his power to arouse his compatriots to a sense of the dignity of art. With word and pen he proclaimed the bitter truth of actual decadence, and tried to pave the way for better things.

In order to make this narrative clear, I will, in this chapter, treat of his work on behalf of Italian art, and, in the next, review his own pictures produced during these years.

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Rome in 1870 was still a great international art centre, and among the many component elements Costa drew together a small number of artists, anxious for better things, sincere in effort, if not yet triumphant in achievement, and helped by these, he determined to organise an exhibition in which he aimed at showing the contrast between sincere and insincere art.

As member of the town council he was able to have for this purpose a building in the public gardens on the Pincian Hill, known as the *Casino del Pincio*, and here in the winter of 1872–73 he arranged a small show of works of art.

It was useless to fight against the prevalent taste with words, but he wished to make it clear to the few who had eyes to see the depth of vulgarity which prevailed in Rome. In one small room he collected the few works which showed sincerity and thought, amongst others some by Scipione Vanutelli, a Roman painter for whom Costa had a sincere admiration; by Raggio, a Genoese, Costa's contemporary, an artist of great force; by the American artist, Elihu Vedder, who still resides in Rome; by another American, Coleman; and divers of his own studies from nature, amongst others one executed in the Black Country when with Mason, which he called "Iron, Fire, and Water," a title which aroused the mirth of the critics of the day. In the other room he hung together works belonging to the prevailing style which, some years later, writing a critique for the *Gazzetta d'Italia*, he was to call the "Spanish-franco-german-semitic-venetian-patriarchal-cardinalesque-catholic-apostolic-and-roman-school."

Our artist's object in thus contrasting these works, and leaving them to speak for themselves, was not then

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apparent to the general public, but it gave food for thought to the few whom he wished to get at, and drew to him a few young artists of academic training and academic reputation, who felt desirous of attempting a new departure, and to study from nature, a decision which would certainly never have occurred to them before. Amongst these were Cesare Mariani and Pio Joris, both artists who have since become distinguished.

It may be as well here to define Costa's attitude towards academies and academicians. As we have seen, from his first start in art he himself broke loose from conventional training and tradition, but it was never against academies that his fiercest indignation was aroused. He considered them harmful in as much as they substitute conventions for truth, and stifle individuality. They represent neither the present nor the future, but the past, and of them, as of the old classic education given in the Catholic schools, Costa used to say that they were dead, but at least had the dignity of death. To fight against these old fossilised bodies with any idea of converting them he considered useless, it was like making a hole in the water, "*dare un pugno nella polenta*," to use his own energetic expression. The young men might be influenced, but you cannot teach old dogs new tricks. However, he respected the traditions of careful, conscientious work, of study in drawing and anatomy, which is encouraged by these bodies, and the lack of which he considered so detrimental to much modern work. What he really hated was slap-dash work, vulgarity in feeling and execution, chance and luck replacing solid work, which aims steadily at a clearly realised ideal. And this shallowness and happy-go-lucky style he considered characteristic of

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the Neapolitan school of which Domenico Morelli and Filippo Palizzi were then the chief representatives.

As proof of the haphazard system followed by these artists, Costa used to relate an anecdote which he had from Morelli himself as to the genesis of the "Iconoclasts," a large historical picture by that artist, famous in its own day, now only interesting as a page in the art-history of that time. Morelli said that Filippo Palizzi, the animal painter, or, as Costa used to describe him, the painter of the *fur* of animals, called on him and looked at his "Iconoclasts." "But you have painted a picture like any one else's," exclaimed Palizzi. "Well, but what can I do?" retorted the artist. "I will just stay here, and you paint away, paint away till I have become one of the figures of your picture." "I set to work, and painted all day like a madman," concluded Morelli, "I hardly saw what I was doing; by the evening I thought I had ruined the picture. Next morning I perceived that it was finished." This was the school of art which Costa stigmatised as the school of hazard, *l'arte da pennellate*, and of which, as such, he unconditionally disapproved.

The exhibition held on the Pincio was followed in 1874 by another of a small collection of the works of Costa and his English friend, the painter, Edgar Barclay, who were thus able to show their work, so individual in feeling and different in character to the prevailing art of the day, to those few who could appreciate it. It was on this occasion that Enrico Coleman, then carried away by the prevalent decadence, first made the personal acquaintance of Giovanni Costa, and, to his surprise, heard from him the praises of his father, Charles Coleman, who had died that year, but whose art was then almost completely forgotten and despised.

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In the winter of 1875–76, Costa, gathering round him the few Italian artists whom his work, shown in Rome, had drawn to him, and the many English and other foreign artists and art lovers who made of Rome their centre, founded the Gold Club.

The object of this association was to lead the artists belonging to it to the study of nature, and the club, to which belonged, amongst others, the sculptors Giulio Monteverde and Ugolino Panichi, the painter Umberto Seratrice, author of some notable works, who died towards 1876, and many others, largely foreigners, used to organise walks and sketching expeditions in the country, and sought to bring together all interested in serious and sincere art. A certain Swiss, by name Buchser, an art lover and patron, took a prominent part in the organisation; he was a jovial, hearty man who was well suited to give life to such a club, and under his influence the association went merrily forward for a year or two; country walks, and the study of nature, being diversified by rests in the country *osterie* (inns), where Herr Buchser saw to it that the inner man was suitably refreshed.

But these efforts, though they might bear fruit in the future, could not stem the flood of vulgarity which carried all before it. The artists of the day laughed at this *Vox clamantis in deserto*, their art *paid*, and beyond that they did not care.

In fact, in Rome, artists were then occupied principally in amusing themselves. The Italian Government, anxious that the population should not feel too sharply the transition from the pleasure-loving régime of the popes, who always took care to gild over the moral and material indigence of the city, encouraged these frivolities. The

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masquerades at Cervara, and those got up by the *Pasquino* club, and above all the festivities for the Carnival, preoccupied people to the exclusion of serious matters; and one of the first mayors of the new capital, Pianciani, personally begged the artists of the *Circolo Artistico*, "men of talent," as he styled them, not to abandon him in so grave a crisis. A harsher, bitterer lesson than any Costa alone could give was needed to arouse these men to a sense of shame, and this lesson was given them at the Paris International Exhibition held in 1878.

The Italian section—in the selection of which the London "Academy" did not hesitate to assert that the Commission had been guilty of jobbery, accepting or excluding artists with a view to party politics, more than to real value—was most severely, though justly, criticised and condemned by the English and French press. It was after this moral defeat that Costa, along with the well-known sculptor, Giulio Monteverde, whose work was among the few Italian things admired at the Paris Exhibition, again came to the fore.

The Gold Club was still in existence, but Costa, besides other personal reasons of more or less importance, did not consider that he ought to belong to this International body after the sorry figure which his compatriots had cut in the eyes of the world; and this feeling he expressed in the following declaration in which he gave in his resignation:—

"I resign my position as 'elder' in the Gold Club, as I recognise the impropriety for Italians to belong to an International Art Club, now that the inferiority of Italian art has been proclaimed at the seat of the

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Cricolo Internazionale Artistico in Rome, after the recent Paris Exhibition.

"I feel that we Italians, we alone, must retrieve our reputation if it was lost, or answer the accusations brought against us if they were unjust; and before associating ourselves with our conquerors, or would-be conquerors, we must work out our own salvation, unite to reconquer the lost ground, and to proclaim the truth.

". . . Giulio Monteverde is so persuaded of the strength of the arguments I have adduced for breaking with the past and preparing a new future for ourselves, that he has consented to become one of the chief columns for the formation of an Italian Art Club, based on love and liberty,—love of truth, and liberty of research."

And thus was founded the *Circolo degli Artisti Italiani*, the scope and aim of which is best set out in Costa's own words in the manifesto with which the new association announced its birth.

"The object of our association is to bring together our national artists, to form and proclaim an artistic standard, to give life, character, dignity to Italian art.

"The realisation of this lofty aim demands all our energy, capacity, industry, prudence, and indomitable will.

"Comrades, it is useless to disguise the fact that our art is destitute of that glory which our great predecessors bequeathed to us, and which, in so many different ages, thanks to their work, caused Italian art to be admired.

"Courage then! and for love of our art and of our

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dear country let us unite in fraternal association, and let us prove at last to the country and to ourselves that, not unworthy of our forefathers, we, in our turn, realising the needs and aspirations of the age in which we live, know how to pronounce the word which is the expression of that age, and which the world awaits from us."

The club thus founded under the auspices of Costa and Monteverde, towards the beginning of 1879, was warmly supported by the sculptors resident in Rome, and by a smaller number of artists, amongst whom we note the names of Cesare Formilli, an artist who has since emigrated to England; Gaetano Vannicola, now in America; and Bruschi—young men of talent, but who were unable to make headway in Rome, where the field was occupied by the frivolous art then in vogue.

In 1880 the fourth National Art Exhibition was held in Turin, and faithful to their programme to try and establish a national artistic standard, Monteverde and Costa visited Turin, and, on their return, read before the club a report, the one on the sculpture, the other on the painting there exhibited.

At the request of Ferdinando Martini, then editor of the *Fanfulla*, these reports were published in the columns of the Florentine paper. This was the first time that Costa published an art criticism, and it was the forerunner of that brilliant series of articles in which he later on displayed such remarkable critical gifts, and showed with what wit and vigour he could wield his pen.

From his report on the Turin Exhibition we quote the following passage:—"The difficulty which besets Italy in her effort to do good work in art, and to

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develop an artistic individuality of her own, lies largely in the fact that Italian art has not a solid basis in the sentiments and needs of the nation, does not live on the wealth of its own country. For whom, then, does it produce? and why? We have the Court, the Ministers, the Provinces, Municipalities, and Promoting Societies, which raise false hopes, and end by purchasing the works of those who worry them most. These bodies do not buy for love of art, but in order to help the unfortunate and the importunate; there are also the picture-dealers, but those who wish to cater for them must take care to keep up with the latest Parisian styles."

The artist in these lines pointed to one of the real curses of modern Italian art, the habit of relying for purchase on the Government, the consequent production of works destined to fill the many national collections, bought frequently for a mere song, and often chosen without any artistic criterion, the choice being dictated by motives of political opportunism; a system which gives rise in artistic circles to intrigues which must always be detrimental to, and alien from, true art.

In 1881 the National Exhibition was held in Milan, and, on this occasion, at the request of many artists, his friends, and encouraged by Ferdinando Martini, Costa published in the *Fanfulla della Domenica* a series of "Letters to Artists," in which he reviewed and criticised the works there shown. In the opening paragraph of the first of these letters, dated 12th June 1881, he explains why he consented to take up the pen:—

"I am not of the opinion of those critics, profane in art, who would like to throw out of the window the

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artist's pen and ink pot; neither do I agree with those artists who would like to exclude from judging works of art all those who do not paint. The artist not only has the right, but it is his duty as a man, and a man necessarily possessed of the requisite knowledge, to pronounce judgment on matters pertaining to his own art, inasmuch as he is conscious of his own mission, and responsible for his own acts."

And in this brilliant series of criticisms, written with the caustic humour, with the epigrammatic conciseness which characterised his conversation, Costa reviews the work of the artists of his day. His judgments are frequently severe, for his object was to arouse his countrymen, of whose fundamental capacity he never doubted, to better things, not to bring a salve to complacent vanity, or to form part of a mutual admiration society. He speaks out, gives his opinion, at times brutally, always sincerely, speaking with that assurance which real knowledge gives. For Costa was singularly learned in his art. In his own work there is nothing unexpected, nothing is left to chance. His pictures are full of sentiment because his was a poetic nature, and he saw through the medium of his own temperament, but, in the composition and execution of a picture he was excellent, because he knew what was right and how to do it, and set about it in the right way; and it was just this quality which gave value to his criticisms. Moreover, if he was uncompromisingly severe when he thought necessary, nobody could be more generously laudative and encouraging than he whenever he thought he saw talent or sincere effort. Time has confirmed many of his judgments. Of Francesco Paolo Michetti, the Abruzzese artist, whose

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work has since aroused so much attention in Italy and abroad, he wrote:—

"Michetti possesses the happiest, the most delightful artistic organisation, and also the most corrupt." And writing in a later series of criticisms, published in the *Gazzetta d'Italia* in 1883, about Michetti's great picture, "Il Voto," then exhibited in Rome, and now purchased for the National Gallery of that city, he says: "Oh, what will the love of novelty not do to-day! The artist first paints his frame, then with many flourishes paints in on the canvas the word 'unfinished,'[1] then overfinishes the picture in its details, without having yet thought out the picture as a whole. Formerly studies used to be made first, so as to sell the picture afterwards, nowadays a picture is undertaken in order to sell the studies before finishing the picture. . . . And yet I must repeat that Michetti possesses the strongest artistic organisation of any here represented." And again, writing of the Spanish Academy, where, beside the young men, artists of renown such as Pradilla and Villegas had exhibited, he exclaims: "Well, I assure you that, if you wish to progress, you must learn nothing from this quarter, on the contrary, you must unlearn. The pictures on view on the Janiculum form a collection of wretched subjects, rendered with lascivious brush. . . . Our Michetti is infinitely stronger, healthier, completer than Pradilla or Villegas."

Speaking of Luigi Galli, a painter of talent, and his companion-in-arms in 1848–49, whose "Galatea" he admires, Costa says: "A most eccentric person, this, when one thinks that during his long fasts, shod like an anchorite, with the Roman fever on him, he tramps all day

[1] The picture was exhibited as unfinished.

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long up and down the rough cobbles of Rome in the hopes of procuring the means to get a model for a few hours. And this, too, in our days! In our days, when a youth of sixteen already poses as a martyr, if he is not certain of being able to set up a carriage at twenty!"

Whilst on the subject of these criticisms, I will make the following quotations from those published in 1883 in the *Gazzetta d'Italia* at the request of a distinguished group of artists:—

"The Italian animal painters, and especially the Neapolitan, see in an animal first the fur and then the beast; in the hopes of catching the creature by the fur, they snatch at him, the fur remains in their hands, and the animal escapes from the painter, his dwelling, and his canvas." How true this observation is, all who know the work of Filippo Palizzi must realise.

"A whole age can be rendered for us by one portrait. The life of nature, studied in its broad relations, in harmony with truth, is rendered by landscape painting. Humanity, the habits and customs of living folk, united with the exigencies of nature, are the field of the *genre* painter; and to these three fields of research modern art owes her youth, health, logic, and good taste."

"God also first created landscape, and then modelled the human figure. He took six days to create landscape, one for the figure; with His breath He created painting; history, with its sins, came afterwards."

Speaking of archæological art, a form rampant in Rome, he says:—

"The worst of archæological art is that a picture is painted for the sake of introducing into it some object which has been unearthed and rebaptized, not for

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art's sake nor for the real sentiment of the subject selected.

"A friend of mine possessed a pair of ancient Roman bellows which he kept in his studio, and which he had never thought of, till one day his cat knocked them down at his feet. Roused by the clatter, the painter turns round, sees the bellows lying by him, muzzle towards him, they seemed to be staring at him. Lo! an inspiration! The artist claps his hand to his forehead, lights the sacred fire on the hearth, blows, and blows, and out comes a vestal virgin, guilty and condemned. The purchaser was found at once!

"*Notice to Archæological Painters!* Last winter an Etruscan set of false teeth, mounted in gold, was discovered. Dentists are worthy people who drive in their own carriages, of whom one cannot say with certainty whether they belong to science or to art. A picture with that set of false teeth for centre-piece would redound much to their honour, showing the ancient origin of these benefactors of humanity. The *rara avis*, the purchaser, would be sure to come along."

In criticising a work by Ettore Ferrari, representing the death of the Venetian patriot, Morosini, Costa gave the account of the death of Enrico Cairoli, as related to him by the brother, Giovanni, in Florence, as a lesson to the artist of how a hero dies.

"I will relate an incident to young Ettore Ferrari, whose work makes me think that he has never had the honour of fighting his country's enemies, perhaps on account of his youth. The story was told me by Giovanni Cairoli just after he had left prison in Rome, whilst he was still wearing clothes, stained with the blood of his

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brother Enrico, and whilst suffering from the open wounds which were later on to kill him :—

"'After we had landed from the Tiber, my brother and I at the head of some sixty men, climbed the wooded hill which rose abruptly above us.

"'The spot was easy to defend, and we were about two miles out of Rome. It was evening. Enrico and I, with a very few others, after leaving the bulk of our party at the Villa Glori, advanced along the brow of the hill, and already we were saluting Rome, wrapped in the mystery of a rainy evening, when we were unexpectedly attacked by the whole legion of the Antibes. Whilst we were putting a knee to the ground so as to defend ourselves, Enrico fell on me, dying, his head resting on my left arm, his shoulders on the knee which I had raised from the soil; I also felt myself fainting from the loss of blood from my wounds; I tried to defend him as best I might with my right hand, and he died in my arms.'

"And what were Enrico's last words?

"'Say good-bye to the little mother for me,' he said."

The wreck of the *Birkenhead* afforded him matter for a similar lesson to the painter, Erulo Eroli, who, in his picture of the naval battle of Lissa, had fallen into the common error of making his heroes die with theatrical excitement. After describing in simple words the admirable discipline and calm courage displayed by British officers and sailors during that dreadful wreck, Costa exclaims: "Signor Eroli, this is how men belonging to a great nation die!"

In another article he touches on one of the most common of the ills which afflict Italian art—the pursuit of party politics and the race for office run by the young artists.

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"Art is a jealous and not ungrateful bride, my young friends, take my word for it. If you are conscious of the exuberance of talent, follow the example of those old fogies, our forefathers—build houses, chisel statues, paint pictures, write a little poetry if you wish, as did that antiquated Buonarroti; twang the guitar, if it is not too much to the annoyance of your neighbour; but politics, municipal administration, and certain forms of priestcraft—leave them to others. Unless, indeed, you are compelled by your duty as a patriot to go in for such matters, in which case it must be done at the risk of your life, your purse, and your individual form of art."

Noticing a work by Enrico Coleman, in which the young artist strove to return to honest and faithful art, he writes :—

"Dear Enrico, farewell! If you have any drawings by your father put away in your portfolios, unfold them religiously, frame them, kneel before them, and repent of ever having followed bad art," words which made a lasting and profound impression on the young artist to whom they were addressed.

Criticising the restless search for novelty, which too often replaces the search for truth and beauty, he writes: "Those who strive after novelty for its own sake can boast above and beyond the old Masters, ambition, vanity, and singular presumption. Nowadays it is fashionable to paint in bas-relief, and to model bas-reliefs which look like paintings. We hear people exclaim, 'What a beautiful picture, it looks just like a stained-glass window!' 'What a beautiful stained-glass window, it looks like a picture!' Real art never seeks to conceal the matter in which it took form, but soars victoriously above it."

"To-day the only truly vital forms of art are landscape

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and portraiture. Modern history dons such hideous attire that no man of taste can bear to look at it. Ancient history has already been illustrated by our predecessors, to what good purpose we know."

The importance attached to these criticisms by many of the foremost artists of his own country is shown by the following letter, in which they requested him once more to take up the pen on the occasion of the Exhibition held in Rome in 1896; a request to which Costa responded by publishing in the *Don Chisciotte* of that year the last series of articles.

"ROME, 1896.

"DEAR AND ILLUSTRIOUS MASTER,—Now that all shades of opinion have had the opportunity of voicing themselves, now that the most contradictory judgments have been pronounced as to the value of the works of art on view at the Roman Exhibition, why do you not let us hear your authoritative voice, and write again one of those masterly critiques which we read with so much profit and pleasure in 1883?

"An article of yours, which would reassert a pure artistic standard, criticising with sound judgment the past, and teaching a useful lesson for the future, would be for us, admirers of old of your works, the surest and most wished-for guide.—Affectionately yours,

"(Signed) Nino Carnevali, Onorato Carlandi, Alessandro Morani, Augusto Covelli, G. Aristide Sartorio, Domenico Pennacchini, Napoleone Parisani, Norberto Pazzini, Enrico Coleman, Filippo Cifariello, Pietro Mengarini, Edoardo Gioia, Francesco Vitalini, Gaetano Samoggia, Giulio Rolland, Mario Spinetti."

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But let us resume the thread of our narrative.

Like its predecessor, the Gold Club, the Association of Italian Artists was destined to be short lived, and, by 1883, it was already a thing of the past.

It was in the winter of 1883–84 that the so-called Etruscan School of Art, which recognised in Costa its founder and principal exponent, took definite form and name.

Costa was now a recognised *capo scuola*. During the fourteen years of settled residence in Rome he had gone on steadily producing works of art of vital importance, asserting his artistic individuality in the art exhibitions of England, as well as of Italy, and his efforts to raise the tone of Italian art had made his name in Rome a watchword for the younger and more talented artists.

His circle of English admirers and followers had also grown in strength and numbers. Richmond, in his landscape art, had been greatly influenced by the Roman painter, as he himself is the first to acknowledge. Mr. George Howard, now Lord Carlisle, whom we have seen studying under Costa, had asserted himself in the English exhibitions as a landscape painter of no ordinary merit; Edgar Barclay; Walter MacLaren; the Hon. Mr. Walter James; Mrs. Murch, a painter of much talent, widow of one artist, and later on wife of Mr. Ridley Corbet, himself a delightful painter, and one of Costa's most devoted followers, had all more or less learnt from him, or at least accepted his ideas and ideals in art.

Amongst the Italians who first rallied to his standard we find the names of Giuseppe Cellini, now recognised as the

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most notable of Italian designers; Cesare Formilli; Napoleone Parisani, who owes his training in landscape to Costa, whilst as a portrait-painter he studied under the French artist, Hébert, doing remarkable work in both branches of his art; Gaetano Vannicola; and Norberto Pazzini, whose landscapes are always among the most charming in the exhibitions of Italy.

The reason of the name "Etruscan School" is found in the fact that Costa, its recognised head, was born in the Trastevere district of Rome, which formed part of the ancient Etruria, and he was often called by his friends, Mason, Leighton, Richmond, and others, the Etruscan. The Etruscan School was a protest against opportunism in art, against the facile vulgarity which, from Naples, was invading Italy, against shoppiness, *mestierantismo*, in art.

The ideas and ideals which guided Costa in his art work used to be eagerly talked over and discussed between him and his friends about this time. He was very fond, whilst working in congenial company, of formulating the questions and answers for a "Painter's Catechism," and of inventing texts for "La Bibbia Etrusca," the Etruscan Bible, as he styled this collection of thoughts on art, spoken but never written down; though fortunately for us, his friend and disciple, Mr. George Howard, and his daughters — now Lady Cecilia Roberts and Lady Mary Murray, with whom many of these conversations were held, both in Italy and in England—noted down at the time some of the most notable sayings, which they have most kindly communicated to me.

I quote a few of the most characteristic, translating them into English, though regretfully, as Costa's very

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pointed, incisive mode of expression ill bears translation :—

"The whole of the Etruscan School consists in this—to draw your subject by drawing the spaces of the background."

"The Etruscan School consists in seeing the direction of the lines and in drawing them with strength."

"Be careful not to let the convex lines fall weakly in, and remember that the whole earth is concave."

"A picture should not be painted from nature. The study which contains the sentiment, the divine inspiration, should be done from nature. And from this study the picture should be painted at home, and, if necessary, supplementary studies be made elsewhere."

"There must be critics who make a special study of criticism ; for artists are lovers, and love is blind."

"Two-thirds of beauty consists in justice."

"Bacon is the head of the Etruscan School, for he said : 'Man can learn to feel what he sees in nature ; more than that he cannot do or know.'"

"Sentiment before everything. Art must express the sentiment of the artist's own country, and its merit can be judged by the success it attains in this respect."

"The difference between the Impressionists and the followers of the Etruscan School consists in this : Impressionists do what they see without reasoning or really feeling it ; the Etruscan gets his impression, and works upon it, and develops it at home, adding to the skill of his hands and the exactness of his eye judgment and feeling as to form, and the direction of colour and lines. Claude carried out this ideal, getting his idea and masses, and then working at details *con amore*."

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"One ought to be able to take a walk in a landscape."

"You must always know the reason of what you are doing; work should be systematised and done in order—1st, the construction and building up of the whole; 2nd, the colour; 3rd, the atmosphere."

"One of the mottoes of the Etruscan School is: 'Work must either be done or left undone.'"

And of the catechism, here are some examples:—

Question.—What is the greatest enemy of the oil painter?

Answer.—Oil.

Q.—What is the use of oil painting?

A.—None.

Q.—What, then, is the duty of the oil-painter?

A.—To please himself.

Q.—Is there a sufficient number of pictures in the world now?

A.—There are already a lot too many.

Q.—What, then, is the duty of the painter?

A.—To paint few and small, but good.

Q.—Which is the blackest priest in a procession of one hundred coming in single file down a street?

A.—The fiftieth.

Technique had always greatly interested Costa. In his student days, as far back as 1850, he had formed part of a group of young artists, of all nationalities, interested in discovering the methods of the great masters of the past. Among these, besides Costa, were Page, George Mason, Zaner, Boecklin, and, later on, Leighton. The young men were lucky enough to know a certain Simonetti of Venice, who, when they visited him, would unpeel, for their benefit, some old painting already irreparably injured.

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In this way they studied works by Schiavone, which had greenish grey painted between the local colours and the lights; and others by Bassano, Giorgione, and Titian, which had black. In his Italian travels this study was always foremost in Costa's thoughts, and as a result of research and experience, both he and Leighton, in 1878, adopted a definite system which, in a letter to a lady artist, who had asked him for advice, he describes in the following terms:—

"You will take, dear Colleague, a white canvas, or non-absorbent panel" (he himself used for small studies the bottoms of the boxes in which Havannah cigars are imported, and which are made of cedar-wood), "spotless as your soul, and you will rub the surface over with nimium, taking care that it be even all over. On this surface you will very carefully draw your design with a pen, or steel point, taking care that no great alterations be necessary later on. Then divide the chief values of your composition, starting from the background with simple and opaque colours, and working forward with others gradually more transparent, till you reach the actual foreground, for which you use the surface of nimium laid on on white. After this, you will work at the modelling and chiaroscuro in a monochrome colour of your choice. I have always made use of burnt umber, red, cobalt, and white lead. The modelling must be well felt and strong, so as to be able to stand the layer of local colour. As you see, you will now have the design, the chiaroscuro, the modelling, the colour. What is lacking? Light. Before putting it in, you will work with gray for the values, mindful that this, when dry, will have to serve as basis for all the half-tints. And now

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you will put in the light, for which you will avoid yellow, but make use of white, black, and red; and by working over this by stabbing (*botteggiando*) you will make the half-tints of the ground tell out; and finally, when all is dry, you will give yourself up to the pleasure of finishing the picture with scrumbles (*spegazzi*), adding yellow to complete the colour—worshipping God, *Maxima cum lætitia in coro et organo in cimbalis bene sonantibus.*

"Do not let all this make you forget that it is sentiment which must come before everything, in the midst of everything, after everything. In the first place the study, the offspring of sentiment and love, must give birth to the work of art; afterwards we shall have to think of the babe, and of the education of the child.

"Certainly, sentiment united to technical knowledge will be more powerful than without it, just as a hand well armed is more powerful than that of a savage with his nails for sole defence."

Costa maintained that the basis of the sky is black, that of the foreground light. The middle distance, especially in Italy, is opaque. Above all, it is desirable to avoid that confusion which arises from putting in details before being sure of the exact value of each of the chief planes. One must proceed always, he maintained, from the masses to the details, excluding everything that does not help to express the main idea.

Know what you want to do; inspire yourself from nature; and then from your studies build up your picture, on which you can, without danger, work constantly or at intervals, as long as you are careful never to lose the outline, which the ancients sometimes scratched in with a nail. Such was the substance of his teaching.

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From his "Notes on Lord Leighton," we learn from Costa that both he and the future President of the R.A. definitely adopted the above-described system, in 1878, whilst staying together at Lerici. There Leighton painted, as an experiment in these principles, the portrait of our artist reproduced in this book.

For this portrait Costa gave his friend four sittings—one for the drawing and monochrome chiaroscuro; one for the local colours; then, having covered all with grey, Leighton painted in the lights with red, white, and black, making use of the thoroughly dried grey beneath for his half-tints. With scrumbles he completed the colour and the modelling.

The *Scuola Etrusca*, whilst inspiring in England a small group of highly refined and thoughtful artists whose work, exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery and, later on, at the New Gallery, was always noticeable for its delicate and poetic feeling and distinguished composition, exercised in Italy a still more important influence, though, largely, a silent one, on the young artists of the day.

One of its most noticeable and immediate results was to give rise to the society *In Arte Libertas*, which, at a date when the great International Art Exhibition, now held bi-annually in Venice, was not even a dream, showed in Rome the work of the more thoughtful and innovating amongst Italian painters, and for the first time introduced the Roman public to the works of Watts, Rossetti, Leighton, Burne-Jones, Corot, Lenbach, Boecklin, Alma-Tadema, D'Aubigny, and Hébert, to mention a few illustrious names from a long list.

It was in 1885 that Alessandro Ricci, a portrait-painter of merit (who died in 1891), and Alessandro

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Morani, a portrait- and landscape-painter, both thoroughly dissatisfied with the art conditions prevalent in Rome, which, with the complicity of the press, were such as to really deprive the young men who departed from the beaten track from making headway, wrote to Nino Costa. They were anxious to see a new society formed which would unite the scattered forces of the party of reform, and naturally the name of Costa, synonymous with all that was then unpopular in Italy, where vulgarity ruled supreme, occurred to them. He could, if he wished, give life and importance to the new movement, and to him they appealed.

Costa, though for his own art he no longer looked to Italy for encouragement, readily fell in with the idea, and the first followers gathered round the leader.

The names of the first associates were Vincenzo Cabianca, a painter who had already earned himself a notable position in European art; Alessandro Castelli; Onorato Carlandi, then just returned from a long stay in England; Enrico Coleman; Giuseppe Cellini; Giuseppe Raggio, the Genoese painter; Cesare Formilli; Gaetano Vannicola; and Mario de Maria, a young Bolognese painter, who was to reveal to the public his remarkable talent at the exhibitions promoted by the new society.

Costa was anxious that the very title of this association should be eloquent of its ideals, Love, Liberty, and Art, and this conception was happily realised in the name with which, at the suggestion of Cellini, the society was baptized. *In Arte Libertas*, as a title, combined the two watchwords of Costa's Life—Art and Liberty.

The first exhibition was held by the associates, in 1886, in the studio of the painter, Giorgi, in Via San

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PLATE XXI

"THE BRIDGE OF ARICCIA"

In the possession of Hon. Walter J. James

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Niccolò di Tolentino. On this very first occasion the society began well, for in the small room were on view a series of works by Mario de Maria, which at once proclaimed the remarkable gifts of this hitherto unknown artist. Costa exhibited one of his early works, the "Bridge at Ariccia," now belonging to the Hon. Walter James, and a fine autumn landscape; and Cabianca was represented by some characteristic views of the Maremma.

In the following year, in April 1887, the society, which had recruited two new adepts in the person of Luigi Serra, who exhibited some fine drawings, and Raimondo Pontecorvo, held its exhibition in the studio of Scipione Vannutelli, in the Palazzo Doria, Piazza Navona. The small group of artists, which had only attracted the attention of the few the previous year, had already gained in importance and consideration; the Minister of Education, Coppino, opened the exhibition, which was visited within a few days of its inauguration by Queen Margherita. *In Arte Libertas* was talked of and discussed, and the school of art, against which it was an eloquent protest, and the critics, who are almost always misoneists, did it the honour of opening on it the flood-gates of their wrath. The only papers which dared to say a good word for the bold artists were the *Tribuna*, in which the well-known critic, Angelo Conti, then wrote, and the *Gazzetta d'Italia*, then a very well-reputed journal, in which Diego Angeli, at his first steps in a career in which he has since distinguished himself, spoke out the truth in spite of the hostility of the many.

In 1882 the Italian Exhibition was held at Earl's Court, in London, and the *In Arte Libertas* decided to exhibit there for the occasion instead of in Rome, and,

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strengthened by Aristide Sartorio, who first joined it on this occasion, it exhibited works, among others the first pictures by Segantini to be seen in England, which proved to the English public that there was still a vital and noble art in Italy.

But the most notable of the exhibitions promoted by the new society was undoubtedly that held in 1890 in the rooms of the *Galleria delle Belle Arti*. On that occasion Costa, always the life and soul of the association, managed to realise his dream of a really fine collection of modern works of art on view in Rome, which by history, position, and popular tradition, is destined to be a great international centre. The recognised position Costa enjoyed in the art worlds of Paris and London, made it possible for him to carry out his project, and this exhibition was a real triumph. Costa himself was represented by important works, and, besides the regular associates, Fattori, Signorini, Segantini, Gioia, Ferretti, Parisani, Carnevali, Maccari, and De Carolis among Italian artists, were there on view. Burne-Jones exhibited the cartoons for his fine mosaics in the American Church in Via Nazionale. Rossetti's "Dantis Amor," Leighton's "Psyche," works by Alma-Tadema, Watts, Corot, Lenbach, Boecklin, D'Aubigny, Hébert, Puvis de Chavanne, and Sargent, were there; and of English followers of the Etruscan School, Mr. and Mrs. Corbett, Lord Carlisle, Mrs. Stillman, Miss Liza Stillman exhibited, along with several others, but the names I have given show what a really important collection of carefully selected works of art had been got together.

It was during the year 1890 that the *In Arte Libertas*, after five years of life as an exhibiting body, published its statute, the first article of which read as follows:—

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"The artists Vincenzo Cabianca, Onorato Carlandi, Giuseppe Cellini, Enrico Coleman, Nino Costa, Alessandro Castelli, Cesare Formili, Alessandro Morani, Norberto Pazzini, Raimondo Pontecorvo, Giuseppe Raggio, Alessandro Ricci, Lemmo Rossi-Scotti, Luigi Serra, and Gaetano Vannicola, feel that they love art freely, each in his own way, and they unite to show to the public by means of annual exhibitions, their researches in art."

The statute, after fixing the rules which govern the society, contains the following two significant articles: "XIII. The society will pay nothing to the press for criticisms." "XIV. All intervention on the part of the Government, the municipality, or any princely patronage, is excluded."

In Arte Libertas continued to hold its annual exhibitions. The one, held in 1893, in the Pavilion of the Palazzo Colonna, in Piazza S.S. Apostoli, was notable for a collection of the works of Aristide Sartorio, then coming to the fore as one of Italy's notable artists. Along with the pictures of new associates a few notable works by foreigners were always exhibited, and, until 1895, when, thanks to the energy and enthusiasm of Riccardo Selvatico and Antonio Fradeletto, the biannual international exhibitions in Venice were started and at once assumed European importance, *In Arte Libertas* was alone in Italy in encouraging sincere and dignified art, and in striving to form a better public taste.

With the Venice exhibitions a new period may be said to have dawned for Italian art. Certainly much, one may almost say everything, is yet to be done, for it is not a few isolated artists of real merit who can form a national art. But when one thinks what Italian art was

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as recently as 1870, when Costa first began his agitation in Rome, one cannot but be hopeful. Italian art is not decaying, not gradually falling away from a high standard, but painfully struggling from death to life. Costa's criticism still holds good: Italian art must yet become Italian, national, must express the individuality of the nation. It has yet to free itself thoroughly from foreign influence, to stand on its own legs, to grow in dignity and strength, to recognise the all-importance of sentiment, of poetic feeling in a work of art. For this purpose not only must the artist strive, the public taste, too, must be trained, and Costa, through the *In Arte Libertas*, did much towards this end; the storm of abuse which greeted the first exhibitions of the innovators would no longer be possible.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to have a really fine artistic movement in an economically poor country. Young Italy has been poor, very poor, but in this respect also she is rapidly improving.

In Arte Libertas still lives. In 1900 the Count di San Martino took the initiative in bringing about the union of the three exhibiting bodies in Rome, the old *Società Promotrice degli Amatori e Cultori*, the Society of Watercolour Painters, and the *In Arte Libertas*, and since that year when the first united exhibition was held, they have exhibited together, though in separate rooms, in the Palazzo delle Belle Arti in the Via Nazionale.

There is, however, no doubt that this society will soon dissolve. The increasing importance of the Venice Exhibition has done away with the principal reason for its existence, as Costa himself notified in a letter, one of his

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very last, written to the secretary of the society, his pupil and dear friend, Paolo Ferretti; and now that Nino Costa, to whom it owed so much, is no more, it will come to an end, leaving behind it, however, a record of which all connected with it may well be proud.

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CHAPTER XI

TWENTY-SEVEN YEARS OF ART WORK, 1870-97

In this chapter I propose to review briefly the work of twenty-seven years of constant labour, henceforth undisturbed by political struggles, in which our artist produced a whole series of works which complete his artistic personality and fixed his style.

Doubtless the most important part of an artist's life are just those quiet years during which the work which survives the creative hand and brain, is produced; work, however, which must be seen to be appreciated, and to which no descriptions can do justice.

On first arriving in Rome, the Costas settled in rooms in the Via Mario de' Fiori, afterwards moving, when their furniture and belongings arrived from Florence, into an apartment in the Piazza di Spagna, though Nino still kept his studio at the old address in the Via Margutta.

The summers of 1873–74 he spent at Porto d'Anzio, then still a lovely wild spot, reached by carriage through thick woods, and here he painted a great deal, completing for Mrs. Percy Wyndham the large picture of "Women stealing Wood on the Sea-shore at Ardea," of which I have already spoken amongst the works begun in the 'fifties, and which was exhibited at the first Grosvenor Exhibition in 1877.

In 1874 his first child was born, a daughter, whom he named Georgia, in memory of his great friend and

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PLATE XXII

"WOMEN STEALING WOOD AT ARDEA"

In the possession of Lord Carlisle

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brother in art, George Mason, whose premature death the previous year had been a great grief to Costa. Georgia is the "godchild" to whom Leighton often refers in his letters to her father, and to whom the great English artist was fondly attached.

Between 1874-76 Nino produced the small but extremely delicate panel, "Twilight in the Campagna," now in the possession of Lord Carlisle. Of this picture, several years later, Mr. Frank Short, at the request of its owner, scraped a mezzotint engraving, which, though perhaps more a translation than a literal reproduction of the original (for Costa's work is characterised by qualities which can hardly be rendered in black and white), was much approved of by the artist, who wrote on the proof sent for his inspection and criticism, the words "*mi piace enormemente.*"

On this occasion the Rev. Stopford Brooke, a warm admirer of the Roman's work and the possessor of several of his pictures, wrote a small brochure[1] in which, with the wealth of poetic language at his command, he expresses so well the sentiment of this and, indeed, of many of Costa's works, that I cannot refrain from quoting from it here.

The spot chosen by the painter on this occasion is about a mile outside the Lateran Gate:—"It looks towards the old Appian Way which runs along the crest at the back of the picture. The tower against the sky to the left is the tomb of Cecilia Metella; the dark grove of black ilex trees in the middle distance on the dip of

[1] "A Note by Stopford Brooke on the Picture by Professor Giovanni Costa, entitled 'Twilight on the Campagna,' and on the Mezzotint scraped from it by Frank Short."

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the hill is the *Bosco Sacro*, connected by ancient tradition with the so-called grotto of Egeria. Costa did well to set this piece of mysterious gloom in the middle of his picture. It is, as it were, the symbol and monument of the buried past, and he made it as dark as he could, and set it to give value and strength to his whole picture. It is over it, and by its side, along the edge of the Way of Tombs that the sunset light is brightest and purest, most mournful and most beautiful. This place is only a mile from the walls of Rome, yet it is as solitary as if it were in a desert. That speechless loneliness is one of the principal qualities of the Campagna, but it exists, not so much in itself, as in the passion and thoughts of the voyager, who, standing in such a place, thinks of all that has been, and of all that is gone, and wonders at the death of greatness—and the whole of this impression, which Costa when he painted this must have felt profoundly in his direct and simple way, is increased by the large, open, and quiet sky which rises above the ridge and is kept undisturbed. In this picture nature is subordinated to human feeling, and the feeling is, as I have said, of the stillness and sadness of departed Empire; yet of a stillness and sadness which—in the long ages during which men and women have poured into that landscape their regret for vanished greatness, their admiration, and their imagination of the past—have grown into an overwhelming impression of dignity, and of a solemn beauty commensurate with that dignity. This has been realised in this painting, and it is done with a simplicity, a classic temperance, which, when one lives with the picture, takes a lasting and quiet hold upon the imagination. The still and gentle figures, like children

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of the quiet evening, are full, though they are indwellers of the Campagna of to-day, of a bygone classic grace; and are in such harmony with the whole feeling of the subject, that they enhance the whole impression of regret and peace. They belong to the clear evening light which broods above the crest of the hill, but they reach also beyond the realm of sadness in which they partly live, and introduce an image of the eternal youth of humanity and nature. The sorrow and the solitude of the Campagna is thus relieved in Costa's manner by the presence of eternal, self-renewing Beauty."

In 1875, with his wife and child, Costa spent some months in Capri, then an exquisitely beautiful and wild spot, very different from the Germanised pleasure resort of to-day. Walter Maclaren, the English landscape painter, a friend of Nino's, and a young colleague of his in the Etruscan school, was living and painting in the island. Costa, during his long stay, painted a great deal here, producing one of his important pictures named "Marì-Antonia," after the beautiful Caprese girl who served him as model. In this picture the head and bust of a peasant girl stands out, full face, against the delicate, clear, evening sky; in her left hand she holds a sheaf of ripe corn, in her right a short sickle. This work was purchased by an American lady, Mrs. Charles Dorr, who took it to the States. At Capri, too, he painted "Le Ladre del Sale," women stealing salt among the rocks on the seashore, a scene only to be witnessed in Italy where the government monopoly makes it an offence for the poor fisher folk to collect the salt which gathers in the crevices of the rocks; a view of Capri, purchased by Mr. James Reiss; and "I Faraglioni," which shows

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us, on a bright October morning, the two precipitous rocks known by that name, rising out of the deep blue sea, whilst in the foreground a woman lies eating grapes. This picture is in the collection of Lord Carlisle at Castle Howard, York.

On his return to Rome, our artist painted in the spring of 1876, a picture called "La Primavera al Pincio." Amidst the blossoming almond trees, and tender spring greenery, a little girl descends the flowery hill: a delightful representation of spring in all its joyous, innocent beauty, which was purchased by a Mrs. Mitchell, who took it to Florida. From the Pincian Hill, too, he painted a view of the gardens of Villa Borghese, showing peasants at work in the tilled fields, with a background of green banks and dark pine trees, which now belongs to Lord Carlisle.

Later on, in the same year, we find him working in lovely Venice, where Mrs. Murch, now Mrs. Corbett, was also staying. Costa had a very high opinion of this artist's gifts, and used to remember with pleasure how, on that occasion, they used to go out together to paint from nature at Fusino. Here he commenced various Venetian views, "Torcello from among the Reeds," belonging to Lord Carlisle; a view of the lagoon, purchased by his friend, Mr. Edward Sartoris; an evening view of the canal of the Giudecca, with a gondola in the foreground in which is seated a girl, the Marì-Antonia of the Capri picture; and the "Bead Threader," a pretty little panel of a mother threading the Venetian beads with her child nestling up to her, both of which remained in his studio; and other studies.

In the same year he went to Gombo, near Pisa, in the midst of scenery which, ever since he first visited it in 1859, exercised such a fascination over him, and here he

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studied for the picture "Risveglio," the break of dawn over the Apuan Alps, which in 1896 was purchased by a group of artist admirers, and presented to the National Gallery, an honour which greatly cheered the last years of the artist's life, perhaps the most warmly appreciated by him of his whole career. This is a picture of great delicacy and beauty, representing the artist in the happiest and most characteristic mood of his later style. The majestic sweep of the Apuan Alps, deep blue, tinted with rose by the approaching dawn, closes in the background; in the middle distance a dark pine forest rises amidst the marshy plane above which soar the sea-gulls; in the foreground the sandy hillocks and rugged plane slope down to the Tyrrhean Sea, the presence of which, though unseen, is felt in the atmosphere of this picture. In the foreground, stretched beside some tamarisk bushes, lies a small nude figure of a man, just awakened, who gazes, half-dazed, at the rising sun. These small figures, which one is sometimes tempted to wish that he had not introduced, are characteristic of Costa's landscapes; they are not introduced to lend a human interest, but, as Stopford Brooke says, are treated as a mere appendage to nature, or rather as one of her natural products, as much a part of her as a tree or a rock.

On no picture of his did Costa ever spend more loving care than on this. He was staying some ten miles distant from the spot, and every morning he used to be up three hours before sunrise, so as to tramp off and arrive in time to catch the first glimmer of advancing dawn. There he would work amidst the marshy plane, watching the white mists roll away all around him, and doubtless his devotion to his art on this, as on so many other occasions, was in no small measure responsible for the dreadful attack of

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artritic rheumatism which was once more to lay him low in 1879.

This hour of early dawn, illuminating that scenery, so noble in line and distinguished in composition, was a favourite one with the painter. It has inspired many of his small studies and pictures, and it is the scenery which we see in his large picture, "Sunrise," belonging to Lord Carlisle. Here, too, are the deep-blue Carrara mountains, delicately tinged with morning light; here, too, the rolling mists rise from the plane. A tall, sparse aspen mirrors itself in a clear stream running between rushy banks, and the sandy foreground, with its tufts of coarse, yellowish grass tells that the sea is not far off. On this occasion Costa has animated his landscape with a fawn, which he has painted whistling to a bird, waking with the world at morning, vivifying the scene without making it human, "leaving nature," in the words of Stopford Brooke, "as the Greeks conceived it, having its own life in the living beings which dwelt in it with their own intelligence, their own passions."

And to the same type belongs "Dawn," a small picture belonging to the Rev. Stopford Brooke, of which he thus wrote to Costa on receiving it:—

"1 MANCHESTER SQUARE,
August 22, 1877.

"DEAR SIGNOR COSTA,—I only arrived in London after a long absence last night, and I saw the picture then for the first time. I think it quite lovely both in feeling and treatment. It has given me the greatest possible pleasure. In truth, I keep it beside me, and am never tired of looking up at it as I read or write. It is early morning, is it not? And it has all the loveliness, and purity, and charm of that

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time. I once said to you that an evening picture of yours slept. This picture represents a waking world, just that time when all Nature has lifted her eyelids in the dawn, and has begun to know that she has awakened to the joy and brightness and life of another day. And that is what your Fawn is thinking of, it seems to me. He, too, is just awakened.

"I have no right to speak of technical matters, but I have been delighted with the pure pale sky, and the pale peaks against it, and with the faint rising mist that the faint breeze is sweeping away, and with the ending of the forest line, and the painting of the foreground, but above all with the admirable disposition of the masses. It is rare to see so harmonious and yet so great an arrangement of mountain and forest and riverland. And the Fawn seems to claim the whole scene as belonging not to man so much as to the universal Pan.

"Then I love those mountains, and I love that forest, and I love its very heath and reeds, and its sandy hollows, and you have given me all this enchantment in your work. In this gloomy northern city it will give me continual pleasure and hope to look on a picture which embodies all the poetry of Italy. I thank you very much.—Yours very sincerely, STOPFORD A. BROOKE."

It was at Bocca d'Arno, too, that Costa began the studies for a largish picture, "Leda and the Swan," which is now the property of his family. The colour scheme of this work is blue and white, white predominating, justifying the sub-title Costa gave this work, "Il Candore." The last gleam of sunlight illuminates the blue waters of the Mediterranean. The mountains are blue, fading from

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deepest lapis lazuli to the pale greeny blue with which the rising sea mist mantles them. The swan is silvery white, like the clouds which fleck the sky, and advances over the sandy foreground, diversified with tufts of golden grass, towards the white-limbed Leda, who lies on a mound on which white sea-lilies are blossoming, against a background of reeds, burned golden by the sun. All the studies for this work were done from life on the sea-shore near Bocca d'Arno, then still a wild, unfrequented spot.

It would take too long to enumerate all the many pictures in which our artist has portrayed the scenery of that part of the Tuscan coast, infusing into his canvases that deep poetic feeling, that sense of the apartness and solemn and silent grandeur of nature which he so deeply felt, and which the nobility of line characteristic of that scenery emphasises. Sometimes he would turn from the desolate, broken foreground, and majestic sweep of distant mountains, to the pine forest which stretches almost down to the water's edge, and then he has given us exquisite bits of poetry in colour, such as "The Last Kiss of the Sun to the Balmy Pine Wood," purchased in 1897 by the *Galleria delle Belle Arti* in Rome, where it is now hung, and where it will soon be joined by the great work, "Women Loading Wood on Boats at Porto d'Anzio," which has just been acquired by the Government after receiving the unanimous vote of the Commission charged with the selection, for public purchase, of works among those exhibited at the Venice Exhibition of 1903. "The Pine Wood at San Rossore," belonging to Lord Carlisle; "My Garden at Bocca d'Arno," the property of the artist's family; "After a Rainy Night at Gombo," belonging to the Earl of Wharncliffe; and many others of this cycle.

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In 1877, '78, '79, '81, and '82, Costa made stays of more or less duration at Lerici, a district familiar to English people in its connection with Shelley, and one of the most lovely and smiling spots in Europe. Here Frederick Leighton was Nino's guest, and, indeed, they were dining there together under the olive trees in 1878, when a telegram was handed to Leighton, announcing the death of Sir Francis Grant, President of the Royal Academy. He passed it on to Costa, who exclaimed, "The President is dead; long live the President," drinking to his friend's success. Leighton replied, "Certainly, I will not deny that I have every chance of success."

It was during this stay that Leighton painted the fine and characteristic portrait of Costa, of which I have already spoken; and here Costa worked on a whole series of pictures, of which "Evening at Amara Lunga, Lerici," was one. This represents a spot in the neighbourhood of Lerici, known by the name, "Bitter and Long," because condemned prisoners going to execution used to be dragged along that road. We see an old house in the midst of a grove of the blue-grey olive trees so characteristic of that scenery, surrounded by stone ramparts, rising on a steep, rocky, grass-grown hillside, overlooking the deep-blue sea, and in the background rises the precipitous rocks of Porto Venere. This work belongs to Lord Carlisle, who also owns "A Morning at Botri, near Lerici, 1878;" "Lerici," a grassy slope amidst an olive wood, in the foreground, amidst a profusion of wild flowers, a group of young girls are advancing; in the background, sea, and ships, and the familiar outline of Porto Venere, crowned with its fort. Here, too, he painted "Ernesta di Lerici," a small, highly-finished portrait of a peasant girl, which

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remained in his possession; "A Ligurian Caryatide"; and the "Bella di Lerici," a pretty girl, caressing a green parrot, which was purchased from the exhibition of his works which he held in 1882, in Bond Street, by King Edward VII., then Prince of Wales, who, as we have seen in Leighton's letters, when in Rome in 1872, had honoured Costa's studio in the Via Margutta with a visit.

In the summer of 1878 our artist made a long stay in Perugia, a delightful mediæval city, made dear to him by the works of Fiorenzo di Lorenzo, Bernardino di Mariotto, Bonfigli, Perugino, and Pinturicchio, visited on many occasions along with his friends Richmond and Leighton. At Perugia too, for he was to return there many times, he had the pleasure of entertaining his dear colleagues, Mr. and Mrs. Corbett, and here, too, Leighton used generally to pass two or three weeks each year, writing his speech to be delivered to the Academy students. Here Costa enjoyed the society of his friend and disciple in art, Count Rossi Scotti, and the last time he stayed there, in 1892, his friends the Stillmans, Sir William and Lady Richmond, and Dr. Middleton were of the party.

The lovely city, shut in by the Apennines, and dominating the wide Umbrian plane, all its surroundings cultivated with vineyards and olive-yards, and patches of corn and maize, with its refined and courteous peasantry, and its many historic associations, breathing even nowadays the Franciscan tradition of charity, and love, and humility, was always rich in inspiration to Costa, and here he painted works full of the spirit of the great mediæval saint whose "Fioretti" were always one of his favourite books: works full of the joy of life, of "rejoicing sunshine,

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trees that exult in the wind, birds swiftly moving through the air, long fields of reeds or grass blowing in the breezes, waters sleeping or rippling in rich colour, mountains drenched in glory and in light."

To this number belong "Virginia di Monte Luce," a large picture in which we see a graceful, fair-haired peasant girl, clad in a green dress, descend the sloping hillside, bearing on her head a basket full of odorous green herbs for the cattle. The life-size figure is buoyant with youth and unconscious enjoyment of the serene evening among the olives, the contorted branches of which are illuminated by the rays of a golden sunset. This has been well judged one of Costa's finest works, and was purchased by a commission of English artists who were acquiring works of art for the gallery at Sydney, New South Wales, where it now hangs.

"Magna Parens Frugum" shows a robust peasant woman, seated full-length on a low wall, humanly typical of the fecundity of the broad landscape of cornfields and distant mountains which stretches out behind her. "Saturnia Tellus," and "Dawn at Monte Luce," in which in the distance we see Subasio, and over a low wall in the foreground the little convent of Monte Luce, beyond which a wide expanse of fertile country, relieved by dark groups of olive-trees, elms, and cypresses, were also painted here.

In this last work, belonging to Lord Davey, Costa has fixed the most exquisite moment of that landscape, just before dawn, when the valley is full of blue, vaporous mists, which the rising sun disperses, and the most ordinary buildings become picturesque, illuminated by the first rays of the sun striking through that mysterious haze. Every morning Costa used to be at his easel in the garden, at

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4 A.M., to seize the precise moment of this effect of light, which lasted only a few minutes.

"Qui per gli occhi non c'è clausura" shows us a nun standing on the balcony of a mountain monastery, gazing down at the wide view over the Umbrian plane; "On the Road to Gubbio" is a view of Monte Catria, "the mountain of the two humps," mentioned by Dante, with wooded middle distance and ploughed fields in the foreground, seen just after sunset, when the sky is of that bluish-green so characteristic of Umbrian twilights: a picture notable for nobility of line and composition, belonging to the Hon. Walter James.

One of the most poetic of all these Umbrian landscapes was painted from a study done in memory of his dear friend, Adelaide Sartoris. She had died but recently, and the widower, Edward Sartoris, a sincere friend of Ser Nino's, as he used to call Costa, was staying with the artist and his family at Perugia. They were walking out together one evening, enjoying the glorious fiery sunset behind the distant blue mountains, silenced by the serene and solemn melancholy of the hour, when Sartoris, suddenly covering his face with his hands, rushed away. After a short time he rejoined his friend, and said: "How often have we watched such scenes together! Paint me a picture in memory of her!" The very next day Costa set to work, and produced one of his most exquisite and poetic small studies, from which he afterwards painted the picture known as "Il Sospiro della Sera," which was exhibited in Venice in 1891, and which remained in the artist's studio on his death, as before the picture was completed Edward Sartoris himself had passed to his long rest. There is a note of tragedy in the two ancient olive

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trees, which, rising on a hillock to the right of the picture, stretch their contorted branches against the clear, pale, evening sky, and in the red flush, as from a funeral pyre, left by the sun, which has set behind the blue mountains, veiled in mist, to the extreme left. The little figure of the Franciscan monk stretched in the foreground, evidently struggling in mental anguish, in whose mouth Costa has put the words, "If love is dead, why will you rise, O Sun!" was added later as an afterthought, and contributes the human touch which Costa wished for, to this beautiful picture.

The most important, however, of these works of the Umbrian cycle, is undoubtedly the large "Frate Francesco and Frate Sole," which was inspired by St. Francis's "Hymn to the Sun." It is the only picture by Costa in which a historical character is introduced, and which, consequently, can be considered a subject-picture. In it we see the little, poor man of Assisi descending from the wooded hills into the broad Umbrian valley, illuminated by the first rays of the rising sun, before which the whitish-blue masses of rolling mist disperse. The saint is exulting in the greatness and goodness of God, as He reveals Himself in nature, and has both arms raised as if in prayer, and an expression of rapt ecstasy on his upturned face. This is a picture evidently painted with great love, and in complete communion of spirit with the period and sentiment which he wished to represent. It belongs to the fine collection of Costa's works owned by Lord Carlisle. The first study for this picture, full of sentiment, remains in the artist's studio.

This work was exhibited in 1886 at the Grosvenor Gallery, and it is to it that Leighton refers in the following letter:—

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[*Translation.*]

"2 HOLLAND PARK ROAD,
14th July 1886.

"DEAREST NINO,—. . . A few weeks ago I gave the last touches (except for some slight retouching) to the large fresco of which you possess the photo, and finding myself free for the first time, I went to the Grosvenor, principally so as to see once more, at greater leisure, your pictures, which I saw the first time in too great a hurry. You will be *furious* when I tell you that my great *sympathy* is still for the picture of Bocca d'Arno; those beautiful mountains, so exquisite in form,; those golden grasses in the foreground; the whole thing, in short, has for me a special charm. But this is a question of taste, I repeat, and not for this do I appreciate less the poetry, the nobility of sentiment, and the love which you spent on the large picture, which, by the way, is vastly improved since I last saw it in your studio—but all this is of no avail; you would have wished that the St. Francis had been the most enjoyable in my eyes, and I know that you will want to kick me when you get the chance; and, mind you, perhaps you will not have to wait long for the opportunity. *I* am *furious* to think that you are not coming to Scotland this year, that I am free—in 1888 I may be dead—but anyhow I am persistent, and I warn you that I am quite capable of asking you for board and lodging for four or five days towards the end of September, or a little earlier. Would this suit you? I should like to make two or three sketches in the open air. I could get a model from Florence—what say you?

"I perceive that I have not yet said what I ought to have said to begin with, that is, that I rejoice greatly

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to hear that you have found (in these hard times) a purchaser for a big picture. Bravo, and at 'em!

"How are the three dear gossips? Has Tonachino[1] yet begun to make articulate sounds?

". . . What a letter, by Jove! I am going to dinner, and will cease to trouble you [*leverò l'incommodo*].—An embrace to all, from THE GAFFER."

During the last weeks of 1878 and the beginning of 1879, Costa lay in his apartment in the Via del Tritone, in Rome, between life and death. For the second time in his life a deadly attack of rheumatic fever had laid him low, and it required all the skilful care of his doctor, Professor Occhini, and the loving nursing of his wife, to bring him back to life.

On the 9th January 1879, Victor Emanuel II., the *Re Galantuomo*, suddenly died, amidst the universal grief of his subjects. The funeral of the liberator king passed under the windows of the artist's sick room, and his wife still remembers how Nino advised her to buy black velvet and crape draperies to hang out in honour of the noble dead, silencing her housewifely objections by explaining that it would be no extravagance, as they would come in well for his own approaching obsequies.

As soon as he had recovered from this long and dangerous illness, Costa was warmly urged by his friends, the Howards, to visit them, and paint and work with his pupil in England.

His English friends were of opinion that a visit to our country, where his works, shown at the Grosvenor Gallery, then recently opened, had attracted much attention, could

[1] The nickname given to his younger daughter, Rosalinda.

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not but be beneficial to him in every sense, and the result of the friendly overtures was that with his wife and little daughter he crossed the Channel in June 1879.

At London he was the guest of the Howards at Palace Green, and whilst there he began his picture of Kensington Palace, typically English in its scheme of cool greens and greys, a work which remained in his studio. He made a short stay also at Warsash, near the New Forest, where he was the guest of his friend Sartoris, then mourning the recent loss of his wife, and there he painted a charming and characteristic view; he also visited Christchurch, near Bournemouth, where he painted one of his beautiful sea-pieces, now in the possession of the Rev. Stopford Brooke, and also a view of Southampton Waters, purchased by Mr. Somerset Beaumont. Later on he and his family went with the Howards to Naworth Castle, near Carlisle, situated in the midst of beautiful country, which he illustrated in several pictures.

"The Old Garden at Naworth" shows us a typical old-fashioned English garden, where, amidst a profusion of flowers and greenery, painted with the most delicate minuteness, a lady, dressed in a yellower shade of green, is walking. For this little figure Lady Coutts Lindsay sat to the artist. This picture, a cool and delicious study of green on green under a grey cloudy sky, is now the property of the artist's family. Here, too, he painted a "View from East Park, Naworth Castle," and "The Trench of the Emperor Septimius Severus," both belonging to Lord Carlisle.

Whilst engaged on the last-named work Costa, for the first time in his life, got an attack of Roman fever; perhaps the Roman emperor, whose soldiers had dug that trench so many centuries before, had left it there behind

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him. Certain it was that no one had ever heard of such an illness in that neighbourhood, and the local doctor, who was called in to prescribe for the artist, was most delighted and interested at being able to study its phases in *anima vilis*. He and Costa had to converse in Latin, as otherwise neither could understand a word the other said, for the Roman was certainly no linguist: though all his life so intimately acquainted with Englishmen, he could never make himself understood in our language.

On hearing of his friend's ill-luck, Edward Sartoris wrote the following interesting letter to Signora Costa:—

[*Translation.*]

"WARSASH, *October* 23, 1879.

"DEAR SIGNORA,—To catch the Roman fever in Cumberland! This is indeed strange!! I am truly sorry for poor Nino, in bed with this wretched illness when I thought he was agreeably occupied in painting in the open air. It is well for you both that in such circumstances you are at least in so good an hospital. . . .

"So our poor President [Leighton] will be all alone at Bocca d'Arno; but perhaps, now that he knows that he will not find friends, he will not go there.

"Dear Signora Tonina,[1] if I only had philosophy to comfort me I should be in a bad way. But the hope which She cherished I, too, have. Faith (I do not say precisely that of the Sacred Congregation) I have never lost—forgotten, at times, yes; but, now that I so need it, I find it again. What is human intellect? What does it amount to? We must humble ourselves, believe certain

[1] This second part of the letter refers to the recent loss of his wife Adelaide, the great friend of Leighton and Costa, a woman whose influence ennobled all she came near.

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things; then, afterwards argue about them if so inclined. What is art? I mean real art, not that of 'De Sanctis.' Faith, first of all—and love—arguments come afterwards. Many priests have talked nonsense, just as many painters have painted rubbish; but God and Art still stand erect—and now you have heard my lecture. Life is a dream—for the many unhappy ones a grievous dream; for the few a pleasant one. But for us all, believe me, something else there certainly is!—Greetings to you both,

"E. G. SARTORIS."

And Leighton, who was then staying at Florence, and who, as we see by the previous letter, thought of visiting his friends at Bocca d'Arno, on hearing of Costa's illness, sent him the following letter:—

[*Translation.*]

"FLORENCE, *Friday, October* 1879.

"DEAREST NINO,—I received to-day your letter written by Tonina, and I am extremely sorry to hear that you have got that cursed fever; but, after all, at this time of year, in Cumberland!! to go and paint in the bed of a river!!! You must be mad. I truly hope that the little country doctor will have set you right again. I shall be in London on the evening of the 2nd November, but do not wait for my arrival. I am now writing to tell them at home to have all in readiness for you. Tonina and Georgia will have my room, and you will have your usual one upstairs; and I shall put up in the new little room on the ground floor, where I shall be most comfortable. Everything is settled, only have the goodness to wire to Kemp to tell him when you will arrive, so as to find everything in readiness and in comparative order. I say

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comparative, because I am told that the passages are cumbered up with those Persian tiles which they are putting in place. But *this* disorder will not be disagreeable to *you*.

"I will add nothing more for the present, except *arrivederci*.—Your affectionate, F. L.

"You will make Kemp understand, but not in Latin, the hours that suit you for your different meals."

The stay in London at Leighton's house, here proposed, did not, however, come off, as to facilitate Costa's recovery from this brief, but prostrating illness, a change to higher air was made, and the party migrated to Bemborough Castle, in the Cumberland hills.

The rugged old castle, standing out alone on the projecting rock, grey, with tufts of yellowish grass growing in its crevices, with a lowering, stormy, grey sky brooding above it, has been rendered with great character by Costa in a picture which he presented to his friend, Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema.

One of his most charming English landscapes, though one of England seen from an Italian point of view, was also done here after his recovery, a quite small picture of a cloud-swept sky, ruddy with dawn, illuminating the undulating country, and Bemborough Castle towering in the background. This picture remained in the artist's studio on his death. Other works done during this stay were "Pasture-land among the Cumberland Fells," "Anercoats River, Cumberland," and "Harvest in the Highlands of Cumberland," belonging to Lord Carlisle.

Costa also worked during these months at the other

[1] This is an allusion to the Latin conversation with the doctor.

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branch of his art, in which he has done few, but fine things—portraiture. The fine, picturesque face of Lady Carlisle was admirably suited to an artist, and of her he painted a full-face portrait, which now belongs to her son, Lord Morpeth; and for the Rev. Stopford Brooke he painted a portrait of his son, Mr. S. W. Brooke.

In December 1879 this most enjoyable and fruitful stay came to an end. The little party left Naworth deep in snow, and on New Year's Day, 1880, Costa was dining with his wife under the olive trees at Lerici, gazing through their grey foliage at the azure sea.

In 1880–81 he was again painting in the neighbourhood of Rome and Porto d'Anzio, and "A Meadow on the Borders of the Pontine Marsh," "Porto d'Anzio after Sunset," acquired by Mr. G. W. Rendel, "Sultry Weather at Porto d'Anzio," "The Alban Mountains after Sunset, seen from a Tomb on the Via Latina," and other studies belong to these years.

The year 1882 witnessed a real triumph for his art in England. His pictures hung at the Grosvenor Gallery Exhibitions had attracted so much attention that his friends and admirers, foremost amongst whom Sir Frederick Leighton and Lord Carlisle, thought that it would be advisable for him to hold an exhibition of his works in London. Costa was doubtful as to this step; his pictures never seemed finished in his eyes, for, as with most really great artists, in whatever branch of art they work, whilst conscious of his own worth, his aim always surpassed his achievement. English friends urged him, but he still hung back, till at last Mr. George Howard cut the Gordian knot by writing to him that all was arranged, that he must come.

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PLATE XXIII

"THE MADONNA OF REGGELLO—AN IDYLL"

In the possession of Lord Carlisle

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The outcome of this move was the exhibition held in the rooms of the Fine Art Society, in Bond Street, in 1882.

Sixty pictures were here collected, representing his work from the early 'fifties down to that very year. Friends and owners lent pictures they possessed, and Costa brought over with him many others. The exhibition was a great success in every way. It was visited by all the most prominent artists and art lovers of the day, amongst others by John Ruskin, who expressed his great admiration for Costa's work. The Prince and Princess of Wales visited the Bond Street Gallery, whence they purchased "La Bella di Lerici," and many pictures were bought from its walls. "The Madonna di Reggello," painted in the neighbourhood of Florence, in 1874, an idyllic landscape, in which sits a mother nursing her babe, was acquired by Mr. Fowler; "A Morning on the Hills of Brianzi," one of the Umbrian works, of which the *Athenæum*, in a criticism, said: "Dignified composition, grave and beautiful colour, and majestic inspiration pervades it," was purchased by Mr. Douglas Freshfield, who owns several other fine works by Costa; a beautiful sea-piece of wave and sky line meeting as if in an embrace, to which the artist gave the poetic title of "Earth's Last Kiss to the Dying Day," was bought by Mr. Pandelli Ralli; and several others were also sold.

In portraiture Costa was here represented by the very fine head of the child, Attilia Narducci, painted between 1864–67, in Rome, in the midst of political turmoil; by the head of the Hon. Mrs. George Howard (Lady Carlisle); by the portrait of the Rev. Stopford

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Brooke's son; by a study of a child, entitled "Sofia, a Bad Girl," painted between 1878–80; and by his then latest work, a head of his seven-year-old daughter, Georgia, now Signora Guerrazzi, to whom this work now belongs. This portrait is quite one of his finest, wonderfully solid and masterly in technique. The pretty fair-haired child, with her long-cut, grey-blue eyes, stands out from the dark background with all the force and vivid truth which characterises the fine portraits of the old Italian masters.

The English press, which had always shown itself very respectful and appreciative of Costa's work, was unanimous in its favourable verdict on this occasion. The *Times*, reviewing his work as seen in this collection, says: "It may not be extravagant praise to say that Signor Costa has come nearer than most modern landscape-painters to the solution which is striven after in all art, and which Goethe pointed to as the high excellence in the work of Phidias, the union of real truth with the highest poetical ideal. The path which Signor Costa has invented and chosen for himself is the right one in modern landscape—direct and close in observation, discriminating in the rejection of useless matter, and forcible in grasping the essential beauties for interpretation into pictorial form. A landscape with these qualities will never fail to call up the poetic feeling."

And the *Athenæum*: "It is perilous work saying that any modern art approaches that of the Greek sculptors, but I find it impossible to explain my feeling with regard to the prevalent spirit of Signor Costa's painting in any other phrase. In one quality it is especially like those great works of art, and that is in

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its perfect exemption from all traces of haste. This quality Signor Costa possesses in a very considerable degree; his work has a placidity which is born neither of dulness nor indifference, but rather of the serenity of power."

The similarity between his work and that of George Mason, and the influence of the Italian over the English painter, is pointed out in these critiques, as is also the singular gift for rendering atmosphere, which so notably distinguishes Costa's work, making each of them so characteristic of the country and district in which it was done.

During most of the time he spent in England, Costa, with his wife and child, was once more the guest of Lord and Lady Carlisle, with whom he again stayed at Naworth Castle before turning his face homewards.

In 1883 Costa was again painting in the neighbourhood of Bocca d'Arno, and during that summer he paid one of his flying visits to Siena in company with Leighton, made memorable to him by the following anecdote, which I will give as he himself wrote it: "There was an unemployed half-hour in our programme, and Leighton, happening to go to the window of our hotel, exclaimed, 'The cupola of the Duomo is on fire!' and as he said it he rushed downstairs to go there. I, being lame, could not keep pace with him, but followed, and on arriving in the Piazza, attempted to enter the Duomo past a line of soldiers who were keeping the ground, but they would not allow me to. Seeing them carry wooden hoardings into the cathedral, I shouted: 'You are taking fuel to the fire! Let me in—I am an artist and a custodian of artistic treasures.' The word custodian moved them, and they let me pass. When I got inside the Duomo I found Leighton commanding in

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the midst. He was saying, 'You are bringing fuel to the fire!' There was a major of infantry with his company who cried out, 'Open the windows!' Leighton exclaimed: 'My dear sir, you are fanning the flames; you must shut the windows!' He had placed himself at the head of everybody, and the windows were shut. From the cupola into the church fell melting flakes of fire (*'cadean di fuoco dilatate falde'*—DANTE) from the burning and liquefied lead, which would certainly have ignited the boards with which they had intended to cover the *graffiti* by Beccafumi on the marble pavement. Our half-hour was over. Leighton looked at his watch, and said: 'In any case the cupola is burnt; let us off to the Opera del Duomo, Duccio Buoninsegna is waiting for us.'"[1]

On another occasion Costa was in Perugia with Leighton when they heard from Mariani (a talented imitator of fifteenth-century work) that an altar-piece, painted in tempera on wood, and signed by Antonello da Messina, was to be seen at St. Eligio, a village some twenty-five miles from Spoleto, lost in the Apennines. The two friends at once set off, along with Mariani, to find this treasure, which Leighton already dreamt of taking home to England; but they took the precaution of first calling on the Bishop of Spoleto, to obtain the requisite permission to inspect the painting. Before leaving Spoleto they could not refrain from running round to the cathedral to look at the frescoes by Filippino Lippi. Leighton, who was in splendid spirits, showed his enjoyment in a novel manner. The prospect of finding a picture by Antonello which no one knew of, the romance attached to a journey into the mountains whither no road led, and this in good company,

[1] "Notes on Lord Leighton," *Cornhill Magazine*, March 1897.

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all combined to make him playful; so, seeing the two pulpits which are outside the church, he mounted into one of them and began a sermon on art, caricaturing a modern art critic of Perugia. "Art," he said, "is a sentiment, an idea, a revelation," but at the word revelation appeared the bishop himself, walking between two stout priests, and Frederick disappeared into the pulpit stair, nor re-appeared, till the bishop had slowly passed holding a solemn discussion with his two companions. Early the next day the friends set off in a ramshackle, three-horse diligence, which, after a short time, they had to help the horses to drag up the dry bed of a mountain torrent. At last the conveyance came to pieces, and, unharnessing the horses, they rode them to a village which, however, was not St. Eligio, from which they were yet divided by a deep mountain ravine which they had to scramble down, and up the other side, before reaching their goal. At last they found the village priest, who hastened to place at their disposal the packing-case containing the work for which they had come so far. But, alas! of Antonello nothing remained but a scrap of the gold brocade of the Virgin's dress, and the signature; the rest had been all barbarously repainted in the seventeenth century.

And whilst talking about these excursions with Leighton I will print the following letter, which shows how full of fun and boyish spirits the President used to be during these brief Italian holidays:—

[*Translation.*]

"PERUGIA, *Saturday, 20th October* 1887.

"Now at last, Ser Ninone, I am able to tell you what my plans are. Delayed longer than I had thought for by

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that blessed work of mine [the Academy speech], I am, as you see, still at Perugia; it is true that I am leaving to-morrow, but as I have got so late I shall only have two days in Rome—two visits to the Vatican, and off!—I shall leave Rome on Wednesday morning, and here is my prospective itinerary: Wednesday evening, about 6.30, at Siena, where I must look again at some things (always with reference to the above-mentioned work). On Thursday evening, by the train which leaves about 9, I shall go to Poggibonsi; there I should like to find, but who knows if I shall, Professor Giovanni Costa at the station, with whom, after sleeping at Poggibonsi, I would go early in the morning to see a certain Gozzoli at San Gemignano—afterwards leaving towards 2 P.M. for Pisa and Bocca d'Arno. There I hope to pass Saturday with a certain gaffer of mine and his family. On Sunday, however, I and the said gaffer must go to Pisa (Campo Santo), to Lucca (Nicola Pisano), and in the evening to Florence. There the two illustrious artists will put up at the *Hotel de l'Arno* for the space of two days; and on Wednesday the President will set off for Turin, homewards. What say you? If you are in time to send me a line to Siena, do so; but the best would be for you to let me see your illustrious nose[1] at the station of Poggibonsi.

"I was sorry for you at having to turn your house topsy-turvey last month for a mistake, and on reading the words '*polenta* with little birds,' a more or less putative tear ran down my senile cheek. But I consoled myself with two Christian thoughts—firstly, that you had certainly eaten a double help of the said *polenta;* and,

[1] Friends used often to join Costa in joking about his prominent, characteristic nose.

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secondly, that if you were deprived of the supreme happiness of my company, you at least had the not despicable one of having no company at all. Whereupon I, consoled, send you all, in anticipation, a godfatherly embrace,

"THE GAFFER."

In 1885 Costa was again at Bocca d'Arno, where he purchased that year a charming villa on the sea front, with the pine woods coming right down to the garden wall. Here, henceforth, he always spent some months of every year, and here Leighton stayed with him, as we see by the preceding letter, studying on one occasion in the pine forests for the background of his picture, "Daphnephoria." Here, too, he was often visited by the Corbetts and other artist friends, to whom he had revealed the many beauties of the scenery.

In 1887, along with William Stillman, then *Times* correspondent in Rome, and his two daughters, Lisa and Bella, Costa and his family—now increased by the birth, in 1885, of a second daughter, named Rosalinda, after Lady Carlisle—passed several weeks in the summer at San Felice, beyond Terracina, on the edge of the Pontine marshes; a most lovely spot, almost tropical in character. Here Costa painted one of his important pictures, "If love is dead, why do you rise, oh, sun!" In this canvas we get the whole sweep of the bay, shut in by the sloping line of the Apennines, with Monte Circeo standing out on the horizon. In the foreground, seated on the wide terrace facing the bay, a Dominican friar has thrown his arms along the low parapet, and, racked with secret anguish, gazes at the scene, so beautiful in its melancholy grandeur, illuminated by the rising sun.

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Later on in the year Costa was again at Bocca d'Arno, working with all the old faith and enthusiasm, as we see by this letter written to his friend of the Florentine days, Giovanni Fattori :—

"Bocca d'Arno, *23rd October* 1887.

"Dear Fattori,— . . . I still work on like a spoiled and impenitent child, and sometimes I seem ridiculous to myself. However, I take courage when I think that it is the love of nature which keeps me alive, and which makes me hateful to the traders of bad faith who infest the *bel paese.*

"It is true that life becomes daily more difficult for the self-respecting ; and that by now the public, wearied of the art produced by men of talent, will not hear either of talent or of sentiment, but seems anxious to make a bundle of us all and to throw us *dentro della muda* [into the famine tower of Dante's Conte Ugolino]. Then it will be the turn of the babes to die first. Amen. Good-bye and good luck.—Your friend, Nino Costa."

This letter is eloquent of the struggle which, during all these years, Costa had to sustain against his enemies in the art world of Italy, enemies whom his courageous campaign against the commonplace and the vulgar in art did certainly not conciliate. Indeed, a weaker nature, or one less firmly enamoured of his art, might well have been discouraged by the dead set made against him by colleagues, critics, and public in Italy. Fortunately, he had his English public, to whom he could turn for appreciation and support, or fate would indeed have gone hard with him.

Another letter to Fattori, belonging certainly to an

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earlier year, though, like so many of Costa's letters, it is undated, still further illustrates this point. The Florentine artist had written to request Costa to represent his interests at a national exhibition held in Rome, in 1882, and he received the following reply :—

"ROME, *Thursday*, SAN MARTINO, MACAO.

"DEAR FRIEND,— . . . I am much flattered and honoured at your having named me as your representative in Rome. I fear, however, that I shall not be very useful to you, as I am the most unpopular person in the Roman and, indeed, in the Italian art world, and the following fact will be sufficient proof of what I say. You must know that so far the Committee has refused to hang a portrait by Sir Frederick Leighton because it represents me; nor have I, after the resignation sent in by Barabino, been called to act on the jury which represents the Tuscan artists, as I ought to have been in right of the votes which I have received. However, be certain that I, for my part, for conscience' sake, and for the friendship I bear you, shall do all that I can to help you.—Affectionate greetings,

"NINO COSTA."

The very slight support which he had received from his own countrymen will be well realised when I state that only two small pictures of his were ever purchased by Italians—one small Tuscan landscape which was purchased by Cristiano Banti, in the Florentine days; and a little view, entitled "Foglie," commissioned by Count Luigi Primoli. These, and the two pictures purchased by the *Accademia di Belle Arti* in Rome, one of which acquired since the painter's death, are the only works by this great artist which have been purchased in his native land.

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Towards the end of 1888 he paid a short visit to England, staying first at Howard Castle with the Carlisles, whence he wrote the following letter to his wife :—

"CASTLE HOWARD, YORK.

"DEAREST TONINA,—I arrived here last night.

"To-day has been as lovely as one could wish for ; not cold, an ambrosial sky, sun, and the moon as well.

"I and George dined alone. But to my left I had Tintoret ; a little above him, Dosso Dossi ; behind me, Velazquez — two most beautiful portraits of children ; above them, Titian. Then Rembrandt ; Canaletto ; to the left, Gian Bellini, Cuyp, Claude Lorraine, Correggio, Hobbema, Poussin, Giorgione. From the big windows opposite, splendid sunshine poured into the room ; and one saw three lakes, Greek temples, and Roman bridges ; all things, these latter, which I did not curse to-day because the sky was in harmony with the architecture. To-morrow, at five, I shall be in London with the President ; at six, a hurried meal, dress, and rush off to a prize distribution at the Academy. The day after to-morrow, a grand dinner at the President's ; in the morning, lunch with the Dorotheas. On Wednesday, dinner at Richmond's. On Friday I hope to start for Rome.

"I have again seen my pictures along with the old Masters. One morning, when I had just woke up, my children told me that the old Masters are constantly repeating to them : "Be as simple as you can, love nature, copy from life if you so please, but with a holy fear of the pettiness (*pettegolezze*) of truth. I feel the need of calming the foreground of the 'Whistler' picture ["Fawn Whistling to Bird"].—Good-bye, YOUR NINO."

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From Leighton's house at Holland Park, where he arrived the following day, he again wrote. The twelve letters mentioned by him were sent off altogether to meet him in London, as, when away from home, he was always begging for epistles from his friends and family :—

"LONDON, 10*th Dec.* 1888.
"2 Holland.

"DEAREST TONINA,—A thousand thanks for the twelve letters which I found awaiting me here.

"I have just arrived from the station, where I found the President, who was shedding light all round him, all radiant with his white beard. Note that the train arrived at a quarter-past five, and there was an hour's drive from the station to his house, and then he had to dine, and at half-past seven he was due at the Academy for a distribution of prizes to the students, where I, too, was to have accompanied him. However, in London there was one of those fogs which put a stop to all traffic, and it took us an hour and three-quarters to reach home.

"The cabman had to get down and lead the horse ; with one hand he guided the animal, which was slipping on the ice, and with the other he held a lantern. What darkness, the gloom of hell itself! Boys holding torches and shouting, showed us the way ; foot-passengers called out, 'Hi, there! look where you're going to!' but, spite of everything, the cabman with his lantern banged into a railing.

"At last we arrived at our destination, having discussed all the way along the speech which Leighton made at Liverpool. The dinner was ready, and eaten hurriedly, with the obligatory champagne. I had eaten nothing since the morning. Whilst dining, I got off accompanying him to the Academy, pleading my rheumatic pains, and I ate like

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a famished and attentive dog. But the President, spite of the hurry he was in, never once ceased from tracing the iron line along which I am to run as long as I am with him, and so he has set me down for a trip on Saturday.

"Good-night; I am going to bed, as I am deadly sleepy. Did you receive a letter of mine from Castle Howard?

"Thank for me the kind writers of the twelve little letters; in the midst of these fogs they have been twelve stars to me. A kiss to dear Tonachino. Frederick was much amused by Georgia's letter, and embraces you all.

"Love to all, from NINACCIO, who has the greatest possible desire to repass the Channel."

This description by an Italian of a London fog somehow invests that domestic product with all the mystery and danger attending some arctic adventure. The reference to the "iron line" traced by the President, refers to Leighton's habit of mapping out every moment of his time, a habit which always greatly struck the more casual foreigner.

It must have been about this time that Costa, once more in Rome, received the following letter from Sir Frederick:—

[*Translation.*]

"*20th July,*
2 HOLLAND PARK ROAD.

"MY DEAR GAFFER,—What has become of you? It is a century if it is a day that I have no news of you, and yet the last time you wrote you had burnt a paw; you had again been troubled with the fever; my god-daughter was anything but well. In short, on all these points I wanted news, and you do not send me even a word, and you let me guess or hear by chance from Dick, Tom, or Harry if you are still alive or no. Now, however, I

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insist upon your taking your pen and writing me a long bulletin first as to your health, that of Antonia, and the little god-daughter; then about your painting, what you are doing or intending to do; and, lastly, all about your affairs—have you made any 'tin'?

"I saw your picture 'Amaralunga' again with much pleasure at the Grosvenor, where there is also the little head, so gentle in feeling, of which you showed me the photograph when you were in London; but you must have done very much more than that this winter—is it not so? As to me, I have not much to tell you. I work at the trade of President; I paint well or ill, and grow stout, but I am not very well. I am finishing my portrait for the Uffizzi Gallery in the red cloak of a Doctor of the Oxford University, with the gold medal of President hanging down. It is like, very like! And for to-day this must suffice.—Yours as ever, FEDERICO."

A year or two later on, after passing some little time together in Perugia, Leighton wrote Costa the following letter, undated and unaddressed, signed with a characteristic sketch of his fine head.

"MY DEAR NINO,—Just a line to say that yesterday evening I found here your letter of the 19th, and that I have arrived here safely. You were right, the road from Siena to Asciano is a delight: you ought to have seen how those beautiful lands, silvery like doves' breasts, with their down of blonde grass, stand out against a sea of sapphire-tinted hills, and high above all a sky which would have rejoiced the soul of Paul Veronese. At Chiusi I went to see the museum and a very interesting tomb, an expedition—by carriage, mind you—which I can thoroughly recommend. On returning to the station—

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dry, thank God—it began to pour, buckets' full! I had a lucky escape. Here, so far, it has not rained, but I do not rely on the weather. To-night it will pour, as I think it will with you in Perugia.

"Bonfigli and Pico della Francesca are well and send you their regards.

"By the way, Banti (whom salute cordially on my behalf) offered very kindly to take steps for having my portrait (in the Uffizzi) placed in a less killing light, and I thanked him; but since then I have thought that for nothing in the world would I wish them to do for me more than what they have done for Millais and Watts; nor should I wish that at Florence, where all are so courteous, I should appear to complain in the least of the place given to our portraits, which, after all, are seen very well. Kindly explain this to our friend—he will understand. When you write to me let me know how the wild Roma gets on with the sensitive and prickly Tragic Muse.[1]

"Good-bye and good work; fond greetings to all at home, to my god-daughters and to little Curly-head.—
Your GAFFER."

[1] Roma Cartwright and Dorothy Dean.

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In 1889 Costa spent some time painting at Serpiolle, in the hills near Florence, and here Richmond was his guest. On his return to London the English artist, in a letter to Costa, thanking him for the hospitality received, wrote as follows :—

[*Translation*]

"LONDON, BEAVOR LODGE, HAMMERSMITH,
Sept., 1889.

"DEAREST NINO,— . . . London keeps us shrouded in fog, and in a very black fog to be sure, but Paris is wrapped in the continuous darkness of a moral fog.

"Do not forget your promise to exhibit at the *Salon* next year. We at least who strive for sincere art, ought to show the international public Idealism as opposed to Gold.

"You have always followed your own noble path with love, humility, and diligence. Your true and simple life, a real artist's life, is a pleasure to know of.

"Always keep a heart as you have kept hitherto, and then no one will be able to say that you have lived in vain.—Always, dear Nino, your affectionate friend,

"RICHMOND."

On leaving Serpiolle, Costa and his party proceeded to Pisa for Bocca d'Arno, and it was on this journey that a serious carriage accident occurred in which Costa broke his leg, a misfortune which was the beginning of the break-down in his health. The country practitioner who attended him judged the limb only strained and not broken, and the result of his bungling was that Costa was left permanently lame. This, to a man accustomed to much exercise, walking often as much as fifteen and twenty miles a day, was a disaster, and one which went far to undermine his health.

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In October 1895 Leighton visited Italy for the last time, staying with his old friend in his apartment in Rome in the Palazzo Odescalchi. He was then already in failing health, but still full of spirits, keenly alive to artistic enjoyments, and working with a will. Here he painted his last study from nature for his unfinished picture of "Clytie," exhibited in the Royal Academy in 1897. It was a study of fruit, which he had arranged on a marble sarcophagus in the courtyard of the palace, and at this he painted for several hours, enjoying, as Costa said, perhaps the last artistic pleasures of his life. From Rome the friends went on what proved to be their last little trip, to the shrine of the great Masters at Siena and Florence, and there they parted.

In January 1896 the sad news of Leighton's death came, brought first by a telegram, confirmed by a long letter from the Corbetts. Thus were these two friends of forty-four years' standing parted, a parting which was certainly one of the greatest griefs of Costa's life. At the request of many mutual friends he published in 1897 the "Notes on Lord Leighton" in the *Cornhill Magizine*, from which I have quoted several anecdotes.

During the summer of 1896 he paid a short visit to England, his last as it turned out. He stayed with his devoted friends the Corbetts, and also with Lord and Lady Carlisle, and during his stay he sold two of his works, the large "Fiume Morto," to Mrs. Ruthson, and a view of the "Carrara Mountains at Sunset." He also had the satisfaction of knowing of the purchase of his "Risveglio" for the National Gallery in London.

Later on in the same year he was painting at Bocca

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d'Arno, where, in November, when his family had already returned to Rome, he was visited by the Corbetts and some nieces of theirs, by the painter, Hon. Walter James, and by a friend, Mr. Hutton. The following letter written by Nino to his family gives a picture of the life they were leading there:—

"MARINA DI PISA, CASA COSTA, 18/11/'96.

"MY DEAR FOLK,—I am now again in my own house, and I have with me an Armida, who at six in the morning brings me my coffee in bed, cooks for me beautifully, is very clean, eats little, drinks only two glasses of wine a day, wears poor clothes, but very clean; has little blue eyes full of kindness, which make me feel reborn to a new life; is of trusty character, and has sons who are past forty-five.

"This morning I have received the parcel of papers you sent me, and every evening we work at translating from Italian into English what I saw and heard of Lord Leighton.

"I beg you to send me that revolver with its cartridges, which Stillman gave me.

". . . Here in the evening Mr. James plays the pianoforte, Ascani's trombone is not missing, the little girls dance, Mr. Hutton acts as their partner, and, meantime, it rains and rains, and we go to bed at ten without regret. Keep well, and write to me.—Your affectionate

"NINO COSTA."

This note was followed by another:—

"This morning, when I had already posted a letter to you, the revolver, the chocolates, and the paint-brushes arrived. Thanks, all was right.

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"At least now I have a weapon wherewith to defend my Armida, whom I adore for the delicious custards she makes me, and for the coffee which she brings to me in bed at half-past five in the morning. Greetings to all.—Your NINO."

In 1897 Costa was staying at Bocca d'Arno with his daughter Rosalinda, whilst his wife and eldest daughter had gone to Rome to prepare for Georgia's forthcoming marriage to the Avvocato Gian Francesco Guerrazzi (nephew of Francesco Domenico of the same name, a famous Tuscan patriot and writer, author of the historical romance, "The Siege of Florence," which roused so many enthusiasms in its day), when he was struck down by a dreadful attack of congestion of the brain. His life was despaired of, but his vigorous constitution got the upper hand, and he recovered to live on, more or less an invalid, for another five years.

It was during his long convalescence, as he lay in his bed looking out from the window on the sea, that he noted the effect of, and conceived, his last, and one of his most poetic, pictures, "The Setting of the Full Moon on the Tyrrhean Sea." In this work the artist has chosen the first moments of dawn, when, before the first rosy flush in the east, the fleecy blue vapours flee over the surface of the delicately grey-blue sea, whilst the full golden moon sets in the west: in the foreground a strip of sandy shore, with a tamarisk bush and a few tufts of yellowish grass. This is a work of perfect beauty and extreme delicacy of sentiment and execution, showing what a young heart and firm hand the veteran artist still had. No black-and-white reproduction could give any

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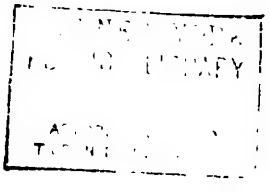

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PLATE XXIV

"CASTEL FUSANO"

In the possession of the Costa family

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idea of it, of the suffused light and colour which permeates it, nor is it a work to be seen mixed up with many others in a picture exhibition. It needs to be seen and enjoyed alone, like many other exquisite things both in nature and art. This may be said to be the last finished work of the Master's, and was exhibited in Rome in 1901, and at the New Gallery in 1902.

After this he still painted on, working at the "France se renouvelle toujours," at the "Sospiro della Sera," at "Castel Fusano," touching, one might almost say, caressing, his old works, planning and thinking out new ones. But his health became ever more feeble, whilst his love of his art, his worship of nature and beauty became, if anything, more intense.

Whilst at Bocca d'Arno, in the summer of 1901, he began a portrait of his daughter Rosalinda, a very life-like likeness, but one which he left unfinished; and during the last months of his life he was working at a small picture done from one of his early studies of the Ariccia days, called "Il Bandito della Fajola," "the outlaw of the Fajola forest," showing a bull, which has been on the rampage, just dashing out of the thick forest into a grassy clearing, in which a pond mirrors the cloud-flecked sky: a picture singularly youthful in spirit and handling to be the work of an almost dying man, but this too he left unfinished.

In this review of his artistic work we have not spoken of another real treasure which he has left behind him, the series of small, highly-finished studies executed on little panels, which he made for all his pictures: studies done direct from nature, and which are often superior in charm and poetic feeling to the finished pictures them-

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selves. Costa himself valued highly these works, which he cherished with jealous affection, for all his artistic life was comprised in them. He never parted with one, and they all belong, a precious inheritance, to his wife and daughters.

Besides these, they possess a whole series of pencil-drawings — careful and delicate studies of foliage and flowers, sketches made in albums, impressions hastily jotted down — a real artistic treasure, showing what loving care, what passionate devotion, this Master brought to his art.

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CHAPTER XII

CHARACTER AND TASTES IN ART AND LIFE

If I have not failed in my task, the character and disposition of the artist, whose long career I have traced step by step through upwards of seventy years of artistic and political struggle and achievement, must already stand out distinctly from the pages of this narrative.

But before closing this volume, I wish to devote a few pages to summoning up the image of "that man of antique mould" whom it was my privilege and happiness to know in his last years.

Born of a wealthy and strictly clerical family, more than Roman — Trasteverino — we have seen him begin life as a rebel in the name of his art and his country.

For his political ideas he renounced the major part of his inheritance; for his ideals in art he resigned facile success and easy popularity.

In character he was typically Roman — violent, courageous, sincere, proud, and dignified, with that natural, grave dignity which seems the birthright of these modern descendants of the Quirites. He was the most loyal of friends, and the most frank of enemies. And, withal, an idealist, a poet.

In his political life he gave everything and sought for nothing. Patriotism, with him, was a sacred duty—not a means to office, a stepping-stone to honours. In fact, he rather shunned recognition and courted privacy.

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He wished to be known and judged as an artist, not as a politician.

In 1894 Boselli, then the Minister of Fine Arts, recommended him to the King for the Cross of Knight of the Order of Saints Maurice and Lazarus, an honour much coveted in Italy, but one which he had certainly never solicited. He used to say that as an artist he had seen the pupils of his pupils in art made three times Knight Commanders (*Commendatori*); as a patriot he never felt the desire to be crucified (as the Italians say when a cross is conferred on some one). So little did he care for such outward decorations, that, though the diploma was his, he never bought the cross to which he had a right; and it was his friend Corbett who at last said he really wanted to see him wear the decoration at least once, and insisted on going off and purchasing it, receiving from Costa the injunction to get the smallest one he could procure.

Costa was Professor of three Italian Art Academies. In 1870, whilst he was camping in the Campagna, before the entrance of the Italians into Rome, he received the nomination of Professor to the *Accademia delle Belle Arti* of Florence; later on he was aggregated to that of Perugia; but only in 1901 was he named Professor of the Academy of St. Luke in Rome. He was then already so broken down in health, that he was never able to visit the institution after his nomination.

Costa began life as a Mazzinian Republican, and, to his death, he still looked upon those ideas as his political ideals. But, as we have seen, in the years of struggle he put the achievement of unity and independence before everything else, and, with this end in view, he was

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willing to loyally co-operate with the Piedmontese, and to accept the watchword of "Italy and Victor Emanuel." The following anecdote, which he related to me, is interesting in this connection:—

Queen Margherita, for whose intellect and judgment in art Costa had a great respect, sent for him once to get his opinion about a religious picture which she had been solicited to acquire. The picture was a modern "Assumption," and Costa, with his usual frankness, gave the august lady his opinion on it. Not a very complimentary one to be sure, for he described the angels who surrounded the Virgin as sexless ballet-dancers, and pointed out that the Virgin herself was draped so as to accentuate, by the folds of her robe, the voluptuous nude; "and," he concluded, "this is certainly not the style of art adapted to sacred subjects; to render such we must return to the grandeur, simplicity, and purity of the ancient Catholic Apostolic and Roman Church." Queen Margherita, who had doubtless heard Costa spoken of as a very "red" person, a priest-eater, atheist, &c., turned her eyes on the painter at this, and with a playful, half-surprised smile, exclaimed: "But you are a Republican, are you not, Signor Costa?"

"Madam, I should wish for a people worthy of the Republic," he replied.

On another occasion Queen Margherita, who had a real admiration for Costa's work, visited his studio, and accepted a small study of flowering cyclamen, painted in the park of the Chigi Palace, with which she was so pleased that she insisted on carrying it off with her there and then.

Side by side with the violent, imperious, dominating

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character, which made of Costa a leader all his life, and which, allied to his remarkable gift for witty epigram and sharp repartee, earned for him many enemies, there was an infinitely kind, gentle, tender, and helpful side to this artist's nature. To his art he brought a truly reverent and humble spirit; he was a lover gazing with awed admiration on his mistress's face, and ever reading something new therein. With him work was prayer; prayer and a hymn of glory to the all-pervading spirit of life, to the mysterious force which moves the universe, to Dante's *Amor che muove il sole e le altre stelle.* For Costa, though neither Catholic nor Christian, nor, indeed, entertaining any definite religious views, was certainly no atheist.

The following letter, written to the Rev. Stopford Brooke, shows the spirit in which he approached his work. It is undated and unaddressed:—

"*Reverendo,*

"To my great satisfaction I hear through Mr. Corbett that you wish to have a picture of mine for the sum of fifty pounds. I think of sending you a small picture which I have painted from life, in early morning, at the mouth of the Arno; a picture which I have painted with great love and fear, as a thanksgiving and a prayer to the Great Maker.

"If this work wins the approval of the Priest of Truth, Rev. Stopford Brooke, it will be a sign that my prayer has been granted by the Great Unknown God.

"Health and peace to you and noble England.

"NINO COSTA."

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One could not well imagine a more virile appearance than Costa's. Tall, broad-shouldered, well made, with a spacious forehead, prominent, hooked Roman nose, and singularly vivacious dark eyes, he looked the fighter, the man of action, every bit as much as the artist. Yet he had a singularly sensitive and poetic soul.

He had a great love of flowers, and animals, and children. The wealth of flowers which bedeck so many of his landscapes speaks for his love of them. In an Italian, his fondness and gentleness with animals was quite unusual.

On one occasion his wife's indignation was aroused against a mouse which had impudently nibbled her best silk dress. Signora Antonia decided that the offender should suffer for his delinquencies, and the marauding rodent was duly caught in a trap. Nino requested to see it before it met its fate. It was a small buff mouse, but on this occasion he noticed for the first time that, like all mice, it eat the toasted cheese in its trap, holding the morsel it nibbled in its little pinky front paws, and whilst his wife's back was turned he let it loose again, declaring afterwards that it was quite impossible to kill a little beastie which held its food in such a way. At times he kept dogs; cats also had their day; but his real favourites were birds, of which at times he kept as many as twenty or thirty. He had a gift for taming animals, and one pet bird of his used to sit on his easel, or hop about his shoulders whilst he was painting.

Costa was very generous and charitable. He had a lordly contempt for money, which he had parted with most liberally on his country's behalf, and he was always willing to help all who appealed to him. To struggling

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artists he was particularly helpful, assisting them in a most delicate and generous way.

Working so much in Umbria, and studying the life of the great mediæval Saint, he had become permeated with the Franciscan spirit, a spirit which animates much of his work, and which has set its mark also on many of the followers of his school. Lord Carlisle was a sympathiser with him in this attitude of mind, and the following extract from a letter, in which the artist requested his friend for some photographs of his picture, "Frate Francesco and Frate Sole," illustrates this feeling :—

". . . It seems that in our age, so eager for gain, and for the betterment of the material side of life, a secular Franciscan Brotherhood is springing up here and there, opposing with simplicity, love, work, and the striving after lofty ideals, the scientific calculations of those whose only care is to improve material conditions.

"The other day I was visited by a Franciscan friar, a Pole, young, cultivated, noble, and rich, who, after giving all his belongings to the poor, has donned the Franciscan habit. This Friar, who has nothing of the proselitizer about him, has put peace in my heart.

"We are weeping for the irreparable loss of Frate Burne-Jones.—I embrace you,

"FRATE GIOVANNI."

"ROME, 5/8/98.
"PALAZZO ODESCALCHI."

Costa's interest in his pupils and disciples in art was very striking. He spent most ungrudgingly time and trouble to aid them in their studies. Even when lame, he would think nothing of climbing the stairs of the galleries to note the progress of their copies of the Old

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Masters, and to give them advice and encouragement. He would call their attention to particular points in other pictures in the same gallery in which they were working, points which he judged might be of special instruction to them. Notwithstanding his impulsive, ardent character, he had the gift of unlimited patience and perseverance in all he undertook, and this quality was very noticeable in him as a teacher. He was admirable in the trouble he took to help fellow-artists, if they desired his advice. He would return again and again to see how a picture was progressing; and if any piece of costume or bric-à-brac was required for it, he would hunt Rome till he found the very thing, and arrive with it under his arm as a surprise to his friend.

To the very last he retained that freshness and youthfulness of spirit which is so often the privilege of genius. Writing to Lord Carlisle in November 1898, he says: "You ask me what I am doing? Whilst the world is growing every day more bourgeois, and I am getting old, I feel that I love ever more simple nature, although my possibilities of doing constantly diminish: *volo sed non valeo;* but what matters it when one loves?" And this was his feeling right to the end. He regretted his failing health, because every day he felt he loved and understood nature and art more. He felt that, strength permitting, his work would have improved; for, to the last, he was progressive.

His sympathy with the young was great. He always took their juvenile experiences and disappointments with the seriousness which wins confidence; and indeed nothing could be more helpful or more kind than the interest he would take in their efforts and aspirations. What he

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detested was arid scepticism, calculating egotism; and he grieved to see how these characteristics in the present generation had replaced the generous enthusiasms which had fired the youth of his own day. He attributed this, in Italy, partly to the lack of any serious religious feeling, and to the office-hunting and vote-seeking which had replaced the patriotism of an earlier day.

Where the proud susceptibility of his nature came out was in his dealings with picture-dealers, ignorant would-be purchasers, blatant critics, and the like. To Costa his art was never a mere means to an end. He never pursued it in a commercial spirit. Of course, like all serious artists, he was anxious and pleased to sell his works; partly from financial motives, and also as that is the best proof an artist can have of appreciation and admiration. But to him his art was sacred, each picture a bit of his very soul, and nothing was more dear to him than the dignity of his art. He hated the haggling over pictures which goes on with picture-dealers, and the *servitori di Piazza*, who conduct rich foreigners to the Roman studios, and to such his door was ever shut. Once a powerful picture-dealer called on him, and after looking at his work inquired the price of a certain picture. Costa replied that it was not for sale, and on the other insisting, mentioning his name and status with marked intention, the Roman merely replied: "That is the very reason why my picture is not for sale." On another occasion inquiries were made, through an intermediary, by some high personage at court, as to the *last* price of a certain picture: "My first price is my last," was the only reply.

A Roman journalist, for whom Costa had, justly, no esteem, either as a citizen or as a critic, once expressed

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some wish to have his portrait painted. To him Costa wrote that he rejoiced to learn that this man, who had risen from rags to riches by questionable means, was in a position to give commissions for portraits; but that he (Costa), though a painter, and an Italian to boot, was still in a position to choose his commissions, and that he certainly should not select that person's face to paint.

In fact, he was always rather capricious about selling his works; in his eyes they never seemed finished; some were specially dear to him for some special reason, and he would not part with them; it was always a grief to him to see a picture go; he would have liked to see them all around him, living his life in them over again.

On the other hand, how kindly his greetings to any callers really interested in art! While Hébert was in Rome, Director of the French Academy at Villa Medici, Costa, who was a friend of the great portrait painter, saw a good deal of the young French students, who were enthusiastic admirers of his work, and who enjoyed greatly his stories of Corot, D'Aubigny, Rousseau, Troyon, and others of that glorious generation. Costa took a never-failing interest in the new scientific methods employed by these young men, and would visit their studios, and observe the results of their latest researches in art. He was always pleased with sincere work of any school, and with that great courtesy natural to Italians, he would, when requested, express his opinion frankly and kindly, whether adverse or favourable.

Costa was a most delightful conversationalist. His thorough classic culture, received in his youth in the Catholic colleges, his wide experience of life, his friendship with so many of the most interesting people of his day, his youthful-

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ness of spirit, and rare gift for incisive and witty expression, all contributed to this. Certainly a good story never lost in his telling; yet, to the very last, his memory continued accurate in essentials, though names and precise dates were always weak points with him. His keen sense of humour not only made him a delightful *causeur*, but got him through many of the little annoyances of life, which to others less alive to the ludicrous, often go far to embitter existence.

When in the country with friends he would take his part in a day's excursion with the same gusto and energy as the youngest, and afterwards it would afford matter for descriptions and anecdotes, more amusing than the trip itself.

Mrs. Stillman who, with her family, stayed with the Costas at Perugia in 1892, has many pleasing recollections of that six weeks' sojourn. They were staying outside the Porta Pisana, in a villa standing in a big garden just above the high road which leads to the Convent of Monte Luce, looking across the valley, grey with the foliage of olive trees, towards Assisi and Subasio,—a peaceful retreat, the silence only broken by the tinkling of the convent bells in the valley, and the amicable discussions of the Umbrian peasants, as they passed along the road below.

Costa would be at his easel in the garden by 4 A.M., and work well on into the morning, when he would rise for a walk into the picturesque old town, which he knew and loved so well, standing before the works of Bonfiglio and Tiberio d'Assisi, or going to fetch his friend Count Rossi Scotti away from his work in the *Sala del Cambio*, so that he might join the party on a visit to the Etruscan

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Museum, a very favourite haunt of his. After lunch, and the long summer *siesta*, Costa would again get to work, painting at a life-size figure of his daughter Georgia, clad in armour, and crowned with olive leaves, symbolic of the armed peace of Europe, a work which he never quite completed. In the late afternoon Perugian friends would drop in for a chat; but Costa, who loved the sunset light for his work, rarely left off painting before the veil of night had fallen on the valley. Then the party would take a good brisk walk, returning for dinner about half-past nine, and then early to bed, to be up the next day at dawn, a custom which was always Costa's.

Then there were delightful days off work, long expeditions in different directions, in which the Master took part, greatly to the delight of the young people, for they knew that any expedition would be made successful if he were of the party.

Entertainments at Perugia have a somewhat mediæval character, and to the uninitiated they often appear interminable. Mrs. Stillman recollects how one to Lake Trasimene lasted from 8 A.M. to 2 A.M., during which time three lengthy meals were eaten at different points of the lake, and the day's proceedings closed with a dance in a barn, and a long ride home in the night hours. Costa's perfect good-humour and courtesy never failed him during the long day, though many were the hitches and little *contretemps;* but with him encounters with Italian bureaucrats, which would have been wearisome indeed to others, only afforded intense amusement, and he never failed at the close of a discussion to lodge an epigram, as pointed as an arrow, into his assailant, on which the latter might meditate with advantage.

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In his personal tastes Costa was, like most Italians, very simple. He was no ascetic, and knew how to enjoy the good things of this life; but a tasty dish of maccaroni with lots of Parmesan cheese, or a plate of tripe *à la Florentine*, would please him as much as the most *récherché* meal, and in his dress, and so forth, he was sparing. But where he was a *grand Seigneur* was where his art was concerned. Then nothing could be too rich, nothing too costly. He spent lavishly on his art. His varnishes and mediums he kept in exquisite vases of old Venetian glass, which he had picked up with an artist's discernment when such things were still to be found in Italy. His palettes were of precious woods. His studio, though devoid of the excessive luxury to which we are by now accustomed in England, was full of beautiful objects, and precious mementoes of dear friends. Drawings by Leighton, sketches by Mason, works by Corot, Décamps, Alma Tadema, Mrs. Stillman, Lisa Stillman, Lord Carlisle, Edgar Barclay, Mr. and Mrs. Corbett, Dante Rossetti, Sir William Richmond, Lenbach, Boecklin, Vitallini, Charles Coleman, Vedder, Fattori, side by side with photographs and engravings of the masterpieces of ancient art, decorated his walls. In fact, his house in the Palazzo Odescalchi, in Prati di Castello, Rome, where he spent the last fifteen years of his life, is a perfect museum of beautiful objects. Old *cinque cento* furniture, each piece selected with an artist's care, beautiful bric-à-brac, and exquisite embroideries executed by his wife, helped to make a worthy setting to this noble artist.

In ancient art his favourites were the great men of the fourteenth and early fifteenth century. He worshipped (to use his own words) Pier della Francesca, Ambrogio and

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Piero Lorenzetti, Carpaccio, Giorgione, Luca Signorelli, some of the works of Botticelli, and Giovanni Bellini; the great artists of the full Renaissance, such as Raphael and Titian, astounded him, these he admired more than he loved. Titian and Tintoret, and others of that school, he admired more as portrait than as subject painters, and he considered that their portraits must always rank as perhaps the very highest achievement of Italian art.

Among moderns, Jean François Millet, Corot, Constable, Turner, and George Mason were his favourites. For Leighton he had a great admiration, his intellect, his masterly drawing commanded his respect; of the Pre-Raphaelites, Rossetti, Hunt, and what he knew of Madox Brown, appealed most to him. Burne-Jones he could genuinely admire, but his mannerisms and defective drawing somewhat irritated him. In Italy, he looked upon Antonio Fontanesi as one of the greatest of the moderns; Ussi he considered a remarkable artist, and the finest representative in Italy of the Romantic school; of the Tuscan artists, such as Signorini, Fattori, and others of their school, he had a good opinion; to the Neapolitan school, as represented by Morelli and Palizzi, he was opposed; of Michetti, we have seen his opinion in the extracts from his criticisms; of Segantini he had a high opinion, and great hopes, hopes destroyed, alas! by his premature death.

Like most artists, Costa was not much of a reader, but what he did read and enjoy was of the best. Virgil, Catullus, and Theocritus were favourites of his among the ancients; of moderns, Dante, the *Fioretti* of St. Francis, the sonnets of Michelangelo, the poems of Carducci, held, perhaps, the first place.

Of his love of Italy, his whole life gave luminous

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proof. For Rome, too, he had the warm affection of a son, and knew the mighty metropolis in its every detail. But, from the art point of view, he had not great hopes of the Eternal City. He used to say that Rome had never produced any very great artists, but had borrowed her art from the peoples she had conquered, spoiling it in her interpretation. "Rome," in his words, "kills all fresh inspiration; she does not model in clay as God did when creating man; but casts in bronze the works of others."

His second country was undoubtedly England; and never did our country have a warmer or a stauncher friend. Certainly Italians as a nation cannot be charged with the sin of ingratitude, and the personal sympathy and personal help which our countrymen extended to the Italians in their day of struggle, has aroused a perennial affection for England and the English in Italian breasts. But added to this general cause which, as we have seen, Costa had good reason to appreciate, it was among Englishmen that he counted many of his dearest friends and warmest admirers and supporters. For the British nation, he always expressed the deepest admiration; he respected their deep religious feeling, their free institutions, their active energy, their genius as displayed in their great poetry and art. Not even in the darkest moments did his faith in England waver. Even during the Boer War, contrary to the majority of his countrymen, the sympathies of this lover of, and fighter for, liberty, were with England. He *would* not believe that she could be in the wrong, and her reverses were to him a sincere cause of grief. He wished her to conquer, but he wished her also to be generous, and would have rejoiced if, after Lord Roberts had entered

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Bloemfontein and Pretoria, the victors had proclaimed peace, and respected the freedom of their heroic opponents. And here, of course, this idealist and dreamer showed how far he was from thoroughly grasping the practical commercial spirit in which England had undertaken this war.

When the English artists got up a sale of works of art to raise money for the Patriotic Fund, Costa contributed a picture, and when peace was finally proclaimed, in the joy of his heart he sent a telegram of congratulation to King Edward.

One of the saddest features of old age is, that he who passes the limit of threescore and ten is sure to see most of his contemporaries, and many of his juniors, pass out of life before him, and Costa formed no exception to this rule. The death of Leighton, of William Stillman, of the sculptors Gilbert and Onslow Ford, of so many noble men who had fought beside him in his country's battles, of the sons of his friends, Lord Carlisle and Mrs. Corbett, who died in the African War, were some of the great griefs of his last years; and shortly before his own death he was to have the great sorrow of learning that his loved friend and disciple, Ridley Corbett, was no more.

Yet how serene and fresh his spirit was right through his closing years, can be judged by this letter which he wrote to Edgar Barclay. It is undated, but probably belongs to 1899:—

"Dear Old Friend and Colleague,—The photograph of your spring-tide picture came as a breath of youth which has done me good. It is a real smile of joy and thought, alive with the laughter of children, the songs

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of birds, the life of the fresh tender grass, and what a wealth of flowers!

"All this grace of God which has been set before me has, I confess, left me melancholy and thoughtful. Why? Perhaps because I think that the message of love is not understood nowadays? Or because the season of love is all too brief?

"I, who am full of years, grow ever in understanding, but can work fewer hours every day. Standing on the extreme limit of life's background, I have discovered at last that behind all is God, Eternal, Unknown, and now I strive to outline life with the brush on this background, and to paint it with the infinite colours of the same, so as to put my puny self in harmony with the Eternal truths."

In his family life he was ever the dominator, the head of the house; in his dealings with his children there was a good deal of the feeling of the *patria potestas*, but at the same time he was a most devoted and affectionate father. The following letter to his little Rosalinda, then aged nine, shows how he could enter into the childish spirit and be a real friend to the young:—

"MARINA DI PISA, 27*th Oct.* 1894,
Fine weather.

"DEAREST TONACCHINO,—Let me hear something about your life, how you pass the night, at what hour you wake up in the morning, at what time you go to school, and how you go there. Take care not to let White Beard[1] accompany you; that man's soul is not the same colour as his beard.

[1] A man-servant.

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"The white cat, with the white soul, is now with Charlotte, and when I go there she does not recognise me. She has fallen in with the habits of her present mistress, and is always running off to see who is going in the tram; and it is to be feared that, deaf as she is, one of these days she will get caught under the tram wheels. She is as fierce an enemy as ever of the hated race of dogs: she is the first to attack them, and when attacked fights game, never receding an inch, and yesterday she scratched Zaira, who had picked her up to save her from a big mastiff. Was the turkey good? And is the hen punctual in laying her egg?

"I did not put in the parcel the ring which your godfather[1] brought for you; but if you wish I think I could send it you by post. Meantime you might write to godfather to thank him.

"You cannot think how sad this lifeless house is; and the garden too, without any animals. The bees no longer hum, and not even the ants are to be seen; the figs have got all sodden, and those two bunches of grapes will not ripen; but the sea is always roaring and the wind whistling.

"So you must vary the monotony by sending me letters frequently, and, if possible, without mistakes, dear Rosalinda.

"Kiss your mother and sister for me and keep well.—
Your FATHER."

During the last years of his life his health grew ever feebler. The dreadful attacks of artritic rheumatism from which he had suffered had disturbed his circulation, and

[1] Leighton.

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produced calcination of the arteries, accompanied by heart trouble in the nature of *angina pectoris*. Indeed, one may say that during the last three years, he lived on, solely thanks to the loving devotion of his wife's nursing, and the affectionate attentions with which his daughters and a few old friends surrounded him.

To the last he retained his cheerful spirit and keen interest in all that took place around him. Working on at his painting, when really every breath that he drew was an effort, following with critical and loving interest the first steps in art of his daughter Rosalinda, who gives promise of having inherited her father's gifts, solicitously thoughtful of his friends both old and new.

His proud spirit rebelled at the ravages produced by age and illness; nothing was more painful to him than to have to give in, to have to confess that he could no longer do what he had done. His love of nature and of art was to the end his supreme consolation. When he could no longer paint, he died.

In those last months of his life passed in his villa at Bocca d'Arno, I spent three weeks in his company. Every day he would call me in, and, lying on his sofa, looking out at the sea he had so often painted, he would go over old times, relating anecdotes of the days when he was fighting and conspiring for Italian liberty; or telling me of his pictures, giving his views on art and artists. But it was of the patriotic side of his long career that he liked best to talk, speaking of the events and of the persons who took a part in them, rarely speaking of himself, until I forced him to, reminding him that it was of himself I wished to hear.

In the evening he would sit in the window looking at

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the glorious sunsets over sea and distant mountains, living intensely in the joy of the beauty of that hour. Whenever he felt up to taking a part in the conversation, he was always the centre of interest, for his gift of witty and profound observation never left him.

One of the last letters he received, and one which gave him heartfelt pleasure, was from the Rev. Stopford Brooke. It so nobly expresses what all must feel on looking back on such a career, that I here quote it :—

"1 MANCHESTER SQUARE, W.,
1st January 1903.

"DEAR SIG. COSTA,—. . . I send my most friendly greetings and hopes for this new year to you. May it bring to you renewed health, and comfort, and such joy as comes to old people like myself and you. I wish I could look back on so noble and faithful a work as you have done for mankind. It matters little that you have not received all the public honours that you ought to have received. Your fame and the reverence due to your works is secure. All who love beauty in the future will honour the name of Giovanni Costa. And your pictures will live in the hearts of all those who love Nature, and the living Spirit in her. There is no fear of that not being felt by the future. And this recognition will not be owing only to the loveliness of the work, but to your own faithfulness, courage, unworldliness in the pursuit of the divine perfection and breath in Nature which every picture that you have done reveals to those who have eyes to see it, and a heart to feel it. Believe me, your work, filled with passion and character, will take rank with the highest work, and be loved and honoured by men and women of

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strong and sensitive souls all over the world. A man may think of that with some joy and peace in his old age, and say with a true humility, 'I have not lived in vain.'

". . . Remember me most kindly to Sigra. Costa, and believe me to be, ever your very sincere friend,

"STOPFORD A. BROOKE."

The last letter Costa himself wrote, just a few days before he took to his deathbed, was directed in a trembling hand to Lady Carlisle, the friend whose affection and enlightened admiration for his works, had so often cheered and comforted the artist.

He met his end, as was to be expected, with perfect serenity and stoic courage. He knew that death faced him, and with all his dear ones round him, he expired, after nearly a fortnight's struggle between life and death, on the 31st January 1903, at the age of seventy-five. In the words of his son-in-law, Gian Francesco Guerrazzi, he died as a Roman, "*morì Romanamente.*"

I here reproduce a drawing which his daughter Rosalinda made a few hours after his death. It is slight, and naturally bears the traces of the trembling emotion of the young girl, but the noble profile in the calm serenity of death is excellently rendered.

Costa was laid to rest in the cemetery of Pisa; but the city of Rome wished her noble son to return to her, and a public funeral was decreed him by the municipality. This spring (1904) the Painter Patriot will be brought back to the Eternal City, and will sleep his last sleep in the cemetery at Campo Verano, on a hillock facing the Alban hills, whose gentle undulating line, sloping down to the

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PLATE XXV

GIOVANNI COSTA

Drawing after death by Rosalinda Costa

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sea, he himself described as one of the most perfect things nature.

It was my privilege and happiness to know intimately another really great artist, my grandfather, Ford Madox Brown. Costa, spite of his large circle of English friends, never met Madox Brown. But they stand linked in my memory as two kindred souls. Their labours in art ran on quite different lines, but both were alike sincere, serious, and original. As men, both were alike upright, generous, and proud, and withal, singularly tender and kind. Both failed to get the mead of recognition and admiration which they deserved from their day and generation, and both alike set the dignity and honour of their art high above any question of personal success or interest.

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